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Afternoons in the College Chapel

SHORT ADDRESSES TO YOUNG MEN ON PERSONAL RELIGION BY FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY, PLUMMER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MORALS IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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TO

MY CLASSMATE AND COLLEAGUE

WARREN ANDREW LOCKE

ORGANIST AND CHOIRMASTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

WHO DURING FIFTEEN YEARS OF DEVOTED SERVICE

HAS BY HIS ART ENRICHED AND ADORNED

OUR COMMON WORSHIP

The collection of brief addresses made at morning prayers in Harvard University, and published in 1897 under the title, "Mornings in the College Chapel," has found so many sympathetic readers that I venture to supplement it with a collection of afternoon talks. The Thursday afternoon Vesper Service with us is of a slightly different character from our morning worship. It depends much upon the College Choir, and the delightful singing of these boys and men is a most refining and elevating influence. It is open to the public, and the pleasant tradition has come to prevail among our students of using Thursday afternoon for receiving their friends, showing them the sights of the University, and attending with them the Chapel service. The preacher has at this service a little more time at his command; and instead of a three-minute address such as "Mornings in the College Chapel" represents, he may speak for about ten minutes. He is addressing also a less academic congregation than at morning prayers; and what he says may be of more general and human interest. It is a light-hearted company which throngs into our Chapel each week, coming with their sons, their brothers, and their student

friends, as a part of an afternoon's visit to the University; yet no one who has had the privilege of speaking to this great assemblage can have failed to feel the serious-minded sympathy which marks these short half-hours, or can recall them without new confidence in the fundamental impulses of youth. I bring together, therefore, a few of these Vesper addresses, partly in the hope that they may be useful — as the "Mornings in the College Chapel" seems to have been — in homes and schools where very short sermons are sometimes read; and partly in the hope that those who have worshipped with us from year to year may like to recall their afternoons in the College Chapel.

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Afternoons in the College Chapel

I

THE TIDES OF THE SPIRIT

Come ye yourselves apart . . . and rest awhile. For there were many coming and going. — *Mark* vi. 31.

ONE of the most impressive sermons of modern times is that of Dr. Martineau on what he calls "The Tides of the Spirit." It is addressed to people as they come to church from week to week, occasionally, intermittently, often apologetically, as if their lives ought not to be so varied in interest, but should be uninterruptedly in the mood of prayer. The sermon lays down the principle that this change of attention from work to worship, from gay to grave, is not to be apologized for, as though it were a sign of weakness, but is in line with the whole

method of the higher life of the universe. Everywhere, says this great preacher, in the lower life there is a steady, even movement of things, but everywhere the higher life is tidal, undulatory, in need of variation, developed through change. Day and night, sleeping and waking, work and rest, smiles and tears, companionship and solitude, business and worship, — all contribute to the ebb and flow of activity and receptivity through which the spirit of man gets its growth and power. Occasionalism and intermittency, says Dr. Martineau, are not the shame of religion, but its glory. They represent the natural movement of the tides of the spirit.

I have read this passage from the Gospel of Mark — a fragmentary sketch of one day of the life of Jesus — because it is an extraordinary illustration of this truth of the tidal life of man. Jesus has sent out his busy messengers and has been absorbed in his own active ministry, and then one morning, as they return, he says to them: "Let us come apart into a desert place and rest awhile," as though he and they must feel the need of withdrawal and the call from society to solitude. Then, in the desert place to

which they go, a great multitude comes out to him and he feeds them; and the afternoon wears away in the tumultuous crowd, and as twilight comes it seems as if again he had to get relief from the strain of this great service, and he goes away again into a mountain to pray, and as the Gospel of Matthew says: "When the evening is come he is there alone." Thus from society to solitude, from action to meditation, from the companionship of man to the companionship of God, from great works to great thoughts, the alternations of the life of Jesus move. It seems as if the tide of the spirit ebbed about him and within him in his overwhelming task, and as if he must put himself at times where the inflowing movement of the life of God might, as it were, set his soul afloat again.

Was there ever a time when people more needed to learn of this tidal movement of the spirit than they do to-day? Never did people feel so keenly the intensity and overwhelming demands of life. It seems as if almost every one of us had simply more put upon him than he could possibly do; more work and more play, more appointments and engagements and meetings and cares than

can be met, until life becomes in great part a hurrying, worrying pursuit of the things that are still left undone. But, after all, is it a thing to lament that we are thus born into a tremendously busy world? Is it not, on the contrary, a source of joy and moral safety that we have more than enough to do? Is it not this that keeps life fresh and happy and saves one from morbidness and despondency and despair? No, the real trouble with the present age is not that it is so engrossing and interesting, but that so few of us know how to deal with it just as it is. It seems to call on one for an unremitting, continuous, exhausting strain, when, in fact, these very demands are best met by an intermittent, interrupted, discontinuous, varied way of approach. That is the trouble with modern life. It has not learned the law of the tides of the spirit.

What is the matter with the business man of our day who finds himself driven to the edge of exhaustion and nervous collapse? Is it that he is overworked? On the contrary, he has been falling off in his capacity for work, and that is what has worried him more and more. The fact is that he has been

working against natural law. He thought there could be no pause in work if there were to be any success in work; and now he finds that it is that very continuity of strain which is killing him. What is the matter with the scholar who finds that, though he studies night and day, he is losing his insight and originality, and becoming only a book-worm and a pedant? The matter is that he has not stood off from his work — as the artist stands back from his picture — to see the parts in relation to the whole. The wise scholar pauses at times and lets his work speak to him, and in that receptive moment a whole new flood of truth sometimes sweeps into his mind, and the tide of the spirit fills his dry work again.

And what is the matter with those who have no work to do and give their life to pleasure? Why does pleasure-hunting get so soon stale and dull? Why do restlessness and discontent and ennui blight the lives of those who might seem most free from care? It is because any way of life that is continuously pursued blocks the tide of the spirit. Play unrelieved by work is as contrary to nature as work unrelieved by play. Take

away the work which makes play delightful, and play becomes only another form of work, and a very wearisome one, too.

Such is the law of life; and one cannot help thinking of it as he comes to these afternoons in the College Chapel, set in the midst of the absorbing occupations of our academic world. Why do we provide this week-day opportunity for worship? Why do some of us like to pause for a quiet half hour and let the world's affairs go by? We are all very busy people, overwhelmed by our appointments, our professional duties, our domestic cares. Is it not a great deal to ask that such preoccupied and overburdened people should come here for a half hour a week to do nothing at all? Is it not sheer self-indulgence to sit thus in the gathering twilight and let the music and the meditations of our hearts have their way?

Ah, but the very law of effective living calls for such alternations. Certainly there never was a busier life than that of Jesus, — his whole great mission bounded by three hurried years. Yet in the morning he says to his friends: "Let us come apart and rest awhile;" and again, when the evening is come he is

in the mountain apart, alone. That is the place of worship in a world of work. It is not a refuge from duty, or a shirking of it; it is the renewal of power to meet one's duty and do it. The work of life is not to be well done with a hot, feverish, overwhelmed, and burdened mind; it is to be well done with a mind calmed and fortified by moments of withdrawal; and it is to be best done by one who from time to time pulls himself up in his eager life and permits God to speak to his soul.

And so from week to week, in the midst of this strenuous modern world, we come here, not to interrupt life, but to quiet and enrich and enlarge life. We do not expect on these afternoons great intellectual discussions or instructions; we come to restore the balance of life and to permit the messages of God, which are so often unheard in the whirlwind and the fire of daily activity, to be heard in the still small voice of meditation. We turn to our hurrying life, and how dry and empty and shallow it sometimes looks, as though it were hardly worth all its effort and its pain. It is like a little stream that has emptied itself into the ebbing ocean, until all that is

left of the fresh current is its dry, narrow, unclean bed, a thing on which one does not care to look. And then, by some one of the myriad influences of the life of God, — and perhaps, by the grace of God, through some word or thought that shall meet one in one of these half hours of quiet worship, — somehow, mysteriously, quietly, the flood-tide of the Spirit flows in again upon the parched and empty life and fills it with freshness and health once more; and the stream finds itself broad and deep again, and flows calmly out to meet that tidal sea.

II

THE PARABLE OF THE MIRROR

Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face. — 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.

THE contrast is between the imperfect and the perfect life; between knowledge as we now receive it and knowledge as we may hope to receive it in the world of heaven. The difference, the Apostle says, is like the difference between looking at things reflected in a mirror and looking at things straight in the face. In this world our knowledge must be indirect, reflected, as the Revised Version says, in a mirror, or, as the marginal reading gives it, — "in a riddle." In the perfect life we shall see directly, immediately, face to face. Here, we are like people who are working with the light behind them, — where indeed it is better so to work; and there, we shall, as it were, come out of this world of reflection, as if outside our door, into the fulness of the direct sunshine, and receive its visitation face to face. Such is the parable of the mirror.

It is a parable which teaches, first, the limitations and imperfections of our present knowledge. All that we can here know, the Apostle means to say, has this mediated quality. There are prophecies and tongues and knowledge; but they are all partial, temporary, to be done away. A mind, therefore, which proposes to adapt itself to this kind of world — of imperfect, progressive knowledge — must be a mind that is itself open to change and growth. Absolute fixity in conviction is not appropriate to a world which is never fully known. The first mark of wisdom under such conditions is the confession that there are a great many things which you do not understand. A sound Christian theology begins with a large degree of Christian agnosticism. As Thomas Arnold once said: "The most destructive thing in the world, because the most contrary to nature, is the strain to keep things fixed."

How slow the Christian world has been to learn that now we know in part. How affectionately people cling to controversies of opinion in which each party sees "in a riddle." Most of the hot debates which burn in the history of theology have been about

things that were looked at in a mirror; and the fact that no one could see these things just as they were was precisely what made them such excellent matter for debate. As one of our own preachers once said of such disputes: "I do not know what conclusions they arrived at, nor do I think that it is of any particular consequence whether they arrived at any conclusion. The most desirable thing was that they should come to an end."[1]

And yet, as the parable of the mirror goes on to teach, it does not follow that what we thus imperfectly see is false. Because light comes indirectly it is not necessarily deceptive or untrustworthy. What we see in a mirror may be a partial reflection of perfect truth. Sometimes, indeed, one can see truth best in its reflection. There are some things that dazzle when they are looked at, and which have to be seen in a mirror. When, in our observatory, the astronomer wants to study a star, he does not look at the star, but at the reflection of the star in a mirror; and yet he measures and analyzes the star with greater confidence and accuracy than if he observed

[1] Henry Van Dyke, *Straight Sermons*, p. 229.

it face to face. The same thing is true of many of the best things in life. You do not have to know the whole inner life of a friend before you love him or trust him. You do not have to know the whole mystery of God before you can obey Him. Round every fact there is a circle of the unknown, and yet out of this unknown there is thrown on the world of knowledge, as on a mirror, a real reflection. There is a region of seclusion and remoteness in every serious life into which you do not hope to penetrate; and yet, out of this inner life there shine traits which suggest the truth, and which you catch on the mirror of your mind.

Sometimes, as you study the life of Jesus Christ, you observe the unpenetrated region of his character, which his disciples could not enter and which you cannot interpret; and you hear him say: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." And then, again, you feel the communicated, transmissive quality of that same life, and the light of it is caught by your life, and you hear him say: "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall have the light of life." Sometimes, again, as you study the mysteries of God, you

feel as Moses did, that there is a glory which you desire to see and cannot see; and then, again, the world lights up before you and you see the meaning of life, and you find yourself, as the Apostle said: "With open face receiving as in a mirror the glory of the Lord." Thus, there is in present knowledge just that partial quality with which the mirror invites, yet baffles us; the assurance of a reality which the reflection inadequately yet truly reveals.

If then the light of truth comes to us thus by what we call "reflection," if knowledge is received as in a mirror, what is the problem of life? It is a twofold problem. You must first keep the mirror pure, and you must, secondly, transmit the reflection. The difficulty with most people is not that truth is hidden from them, but that the mirror of their life is not capable of receiving it. You walk, for instance, with a skilled naturalist along the road, and the facts of nature shine on the mirror of his life and are reflected in ways quite impossible for you to see. The stars above him and the rocks beneath him report the laws of nature, while they shine in vain on the mirror of your unenlightened mind.

In the same way one may stand before some spiritual fact, like the life of Jesus Christ, and, though the truth shines on the observer's mind, the impure mirror cannot reflect it. The light comes to its own, and its own receives it not. The complete appreciation of a character, like the appreciation of anything else that is beautiful, demands the receptive quality in the observer's life.

And then there is the other quality of the mirror. It is its transmissive capacity. Light, by its very nature, radiates. It strikes one spot only to slant from it to another. A boy may sit in his window and catch the whole disk of the sun in his hand-glass and dazzle with it some puzzled neighbor clear across the road. Sometimes in war the signal-service men stand on a hilltop and flash the light from one mirror to another, until at last there is transmitted far across the country the plan of their campaign. Under the same principle of radiation the messages of God are transmitted to the world of men. The mirror of one pure life catches the light on its undimmed surface, and then the light slants on to other lives, and across the years the purposes of God are conveyed and made plain.

It takes a very small mirror to reflect the whole circle of the sun. It takes no more than a very insignificant life to transmit in a clear image the reflection of the light of God. And that is what gives life significance, — not how great it is, but how pure is its reflecting power; not its receptive, but its transmissive capacity.

Such, then, is this present life, — a world of partial knowledge, of transmitted light. And then, beyond all this — the Apostle says — is the world where we shall see, not in a mirror, but face to face. What is to be the essence of that future world? May it not consist in the undisguised, face to face knowledge of things which are not now plain; truth without the possibility of avoidance of it; the realities of life in their ultimate and far-reaching issues? What is to be the nature of that punishment which we call Hell? May it not be found in the absolute recognition of the scope and effect of our mistakes and sins? To see these things just as they are, the height of our folly, the depth of our offence, the reach and self-propagation of our sins, — that will be more scourging than lashes of scorpions to a self-convicted soul. And what will be

the essential character of that life which we call Heaven? May it not be in having things at last made plain, — the discord of experience changed at last into harmony, the riddle of life answered, the motives of life understood, the order and justice of God's mysterious ways at last interpreted? The early Church used to hold that the beatific vision, the mere sight of God just as He is, would satisfy the saints. It was a true doctrine. The essential nature of a perfect world is this, — that we shall see the whole truth face to face. It is the beatific vision of the Divine plan. It is seeing God's world at last just as it is.

And meantime, while we live in the world of the reflected light, what is our duty? It is to keep the mirror fit to transmit the light. What is it to have faith in God? It is to be sure that the light, though it comes from behind, is trustworthy and real. What is the great mistake of life? It is to cover over the mirror because it is not the sun, and to be content to sit in the dark. What is it to live? It is to let the light shine over our shoulder and find it the best to work by.

And what is it to die? It is simply to turn from the mirror on the wall, and pass out from one's shadowy workroom into the uninterrupted and immediate sunlight of God.

III

THE WELL IN THE VALLEY OF BACA

Blessed is the man . . . in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well. — *Psalm* lxxxiv. 5, 6.

BACA means weeping. The valley of Baca is the place of trouble, or desolation, or regret; the dry, sterile, desert, unwelcome valley through which one in his journey has to pass. Perhaps there really was just such a valley on the way up to Jerusalem. This is what is called a Pilgrim-psalm, sung by pious travellers as they approached the holy city. "My soul," they sang, "longeth for the courts of the Lord." "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." But as they thus sing they remember, perhaps, the cheerless road by which they have come. They recall to each other that parching, shadeless valley, deep down between the rocky hills, and sing their thanks to the man who, as he passed through that valley, dug there a well.

It is not easy in a country like ours to appreciate how people in a land like Palestine

felt to the man who had dug a well [illegible]
cient Rome the highest honour was given [illegible]
the man who had built a bridge [illegible]
treacherous Tiber. The high priest who [illegible]
planned such a work was called a pontifex, [illegible]
bridge-builder and even to-day the head of
the Church of Rome is known as the great-
est of bridge-builders — the Pontifex Maxi-
mus. In countries farther east however
the great need is not to bridge waters but to
find them. The valleys are waterless and [illegible]
less, withering and shadeless, inconceivably
barren and stony, so that a traveller in [illegible]
time once said that the country looked as
if it had been stoned for its sins. To [illegible]
thing that a man or a camel wants
sure of in his day's march is a supply
of water, and the chief type of the ar-
is for a mid-day halt and rest where
sible be a little tinkling stream and
grass. Thus for thousands of years
tion remembered in its gratitude
who had dug a well. It is the
the East that sings his praise
traveller pauses at the spot where
triarch Jacob dug a well and
himself and his children and [illegible]

still, outside each little Galilean town, the women troop at evening to the village well, just as they did when Jesus met the Samaritan woman; and they set their water-pots on the curb and chatter together as the sun sinks behind the violet hills.

Blessed is the man who, passing through the valley of trouble, digs there a well. It seems at first sight quite out of place to meet a company of light-hearted people, such as gather here of a pleasant afternoon, and ask them to think of the valleys of trouble. Why not talk of youth and happiness and hope and the hilltops of promise? And yet, who is there of us so young, or so inexperienced, or so unobservant, as not to have come already in his life's journey into some stern valley, with its withering of doubt, or its scorching of temptation, or the pitilessness with which life beats down like the tropical sun and cannot be escaped. Older people, indeed, as a rule, very much underestimate the amount of seriousness there is in many a young, laughing, chaffing, apparently careless life, and how surely it has already passed, or is perhaps just now passing, all alone, through its valley of trouble. Sometimes it is one's out-

ward circumstances which thus shut in upon one, as the hills crowd in upon the narrow valley, so that there is hardly room to walk; sometimes it is one's inward experiences of anxiety, or discouragement, or depression, or disillusion, or self-distrust, that make the road seem pitiless and sterile.

Indeed, there is a time just between youth and maturity when life naturally passes through its own special valley of trouble. It is the time when the interests and aims of childhood have lost their charm, and yet have not been wholly supplanted by the interests of maturity. What am I to do with my life? cries out such a young soul. What was I made for? Was I made for anything? Is there any place in the busy world for me? O my God, open the way before me! Help me through this weary valley of decision, and I shall find nothing but delight in climbing the rough hills of work. So, many a young life passes through its valley of Baca, and finds it as stern and dry as that man in the parable found his life when he had put away the devils of his earlier life, and then wandered through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.

Now, when any one of us, young or old, enters thus into the valley of Baca, what is there for him to do? Some people try to get round it, as though they could find some easier path high up among the shadows of the hills. But nothing can be more misleading than these attempts to avoid one's troubles. You go a long way round, until you seem to have got by them, and then, returning to your path of life again, there is the valley still ahead of you. The only way out of the problems of experience is not round them, but through them; the more you shrink from them, the more difficult they grow. And what is there more pathetic and piteous than to see a life, which has been trying to believe that the way of life is all shady and happy and smooth, come to its own valley of Baca, and simply sink there, defenceless and unprepared, under the heat and burden of inevitable life?

Another way is to march straight through the valley of Baca and to bear it. That is a brave, straightforward, patient thing to do. You take life just as it comes, without flinching or dodging, and you just get through its hard places as quickly as you can. But, after

all, there is the valley for the next man, just as hot and pitiless as ever. You have struggled through it yourself, and that is something, but you have not made it any easier for the great caravan that is to follow. You have done your own duty; but you feel as those men of the Bible must have felt when at last they had to say: "Lord, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do."

Suppose, however, that instead of dodging trouble, or just bearing it, it is possible for you to make it a source of life and strength; suppose that the very circumstances which had seemed to you most overwhelming can be converted by you into refreshment and health for other souls, — would not that explain at last why this dreaded valley of Baca lay thus on your road? Blessed is the man who, coming there, maketh a well. To find under the dry soil of that parching place the signs of water, and to transform that very spot into verdure and fruitfulness, — that is the most gracious use of life. I do not know when or where the valley of disillusion, or doubt, or disappointment is to come in your way; but I do know what your problem is

when you get there. It is not to dodge away up the hillside; it is not even to get through as best you can; it is to discover the interior secret and gift of the experience, as one who digs into its soil. There is not a single experience which you are called to meet that has not within itself some fertilizing power; and there is not a greater joy than to discover the signs of water in the heart of what seems a desolate and thirsty land. For the well, once dug, is not for yourself alone; the experience once interpreted helps the next traveller that comes that way. It becomes a green and restful spot in many a weary journey.

Nor is this all. The heavens above conspire with the effort of your will. "The rain," the psalm goes on to sing, "filleth the pools." The Rain-Sender comes to reinforce the well-digger. God works with man when man is a laborer together with God; and the man in the valley sings, as he digs his well: —

> "It is better to sit at the fountain's birth
> Than a sea of waves to win,
> To live in the love that floweth forth,
> Than the love that cometh in."

The promise of Jesus is fulfilled in such a life: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life;" and many a tired traveller, all unknown to the well-digger, pauses at that spot and drinks, and goes away with this psalm in his heart: "Blessed is the man who, passing through this valley of trouble, made it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."

IV

THE END AND THE WAY

Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? — *John* xiv. 5.

CERTAINLY that seems a reasonable difficulty. Jesus is about to die, and is bidding farewell to his friends and charging them to follow him into his Father's presence, and they say to him: "We do not know whither you are going, and how then can we know the way?" Surely, that seems reasonable. What is a way unless it leads to some end? How can you have a road until you have somewhere for the road to go? And how can you enter on a way of life until the end of life has become clear? This seems the very beginning of human wisdom. You meet a youth who is looking forward into life and say to him: "Direct your studies and interests, my young friend, along the line of the calling which you are soon to enter. When you have determined the end you want to reach, the way will determine itself." Here is the burden of the preacher: "Determine,

O man, first of all, the end of life. Fix the port which shall justify your voyage. Consider the incidents of life in the light of the end of life." This was the sermon that the disciples expected from Jesus on that last night of their Master's life. Jesus, they thought, before he goes away, must tell us whither he is going and illuminate by that knowledge our way, which, without him, is to be so dark. "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?"

Yet Jesus knows that this apparently reasonable demand for assurance of the end of life lies on the surface of a much profounder truth. It is, indeed, quite true that when the end is made clear it gives direction to the way. It is true that one secret of an effective life is to gather up all its incidents into the service of one compelling end. Ah, but how many incidents there are in life where the end is necessarily undisclosed! Before a very large part of each man's future there hangs a veil of mist into which he has to feel his way; and even if he cannot sing with Newman the psalm of willing resignation: "I do not ask to see the distant scene," still, whatever he may desire, he has to say: "One step enough

for me." This is the most solemn region of experience, — the world where round all that is known stretches an inexorable mystery, — a horizon line which moves only as we advance.

And here enters the teaching of Jesus. He is thinking of experiences where the way is given but the end is hid. He does not answer his disciples by telling them even in that supreme moment whither he is going. He answers, as he so often does, the principle behind their question. It is possible, he says, without knowing whither you are going, still to know the way. There is a way which opens, as you follow it, toward its own end. Indeed, as you follow the way you may come to a better end than that which you had set out to reach. The way, as it were, creates its own end. It is quite true that the perception of the end often determines the way, but it is also true, and in an infinitely larger number of cases it is true, that the wise determination of the way guides one to an unanticipated and satisfying end. Answering, then, their desire for certainty about the future, Jesus tells his friends that he is not first of all an interpreter of these mysteries,

but that he is the way to whatever interpretation shall be later attained. "I do not say unto you whither I am going, but I say unto you, I am the way. Follow the way I offer, through loyalty to the truth I bring, and through faithfulness to life as life is given; and the way and truth and life thus followed will of themselves open into the light you seek, and you shall at last know whither I am going, because at first you have known the way."

That is the principle of Jesus, and it is a principle practically verified by us almost every day. A young man, for instance, is considering the problem of his education and the direction of his studies from year to year. Of course, such decisions will be greatly simplified if, as this young man looks beyond a single year, there lies before him some clearly defined professional end. Some young men, by inherited opportunity or imperative demand, seem to have the problem of their career taken quite out of their hands, so that life is wholly simple and sure. But how many young men there are whose future does not disclose itself! They cannot discover in themselves any peculiar adaptations; they

seem to be made for nothing in particular. They envy those fortunate companions who from youth seem to have been led to some fixed destiny. They seem to themselves without any principle of decision, and their hearts cry out: "We know not whither we are going, and how can we know the way?"

And yet, who shall say whether the youth with the fixed end of education is any more fortunate than his undetermined fellow? Sometimes a man looks back from the absorbing vocation of his life, and is very thankful that the decision which was so sure to narrow his interests was so long postponed. Sometimes, indeed, one remembers the studies which seemed to have little bearing upon life, and discovers that these very interests, which were almost thrust upon him for lack of something more definite to do, are the interests which have given breadth and insight to his life and have admitted him to its larger privileges. He knew not whither he was going, but the way he went led him to a better end than any premature decision could have enabled him to see.

The same story might be told of many of the profounder experiences of human life.

Nothing is more marked in life than its quality of surprise, and nothing is more extraordinary than the unanticipated blessings which sometimes emerge from such surprises. You take up your work in life with a perfectly defined scheme of what you want to do or be. You know just where you are going, and the way of life is determined by the end you plainly see. Then, some day, by one of those influences which we call accidents, — by sickness, perhaps, or change of fortune, or the call of new duties, or some transfer of the heart's desire, — the thing that you set out to do is taken clean out of your hands, and you are set in another way, and you do not know whither you are going. That is the first shock which comes through new responsibility, or sudden sorrow, or inevitable change, — the bewildering sense that you are thrown off the track of life on which you had been running and that a new adjustment of things must be made.

Yet, who shall say that this very diverting of life from its predetermined end — yes, and the very barring out from it of the happiness it had in view — is not to many a life the call of God to the better way of service

which God especially desires to open? Many people perhaps can do what you set out to do, but only a person who has felt, as you have, the pang of suffering, or responsibility, can do the self-effacing work which you are now called to do. It may be that the very demand which seems to overwhelm you is what will first discover you; and that the obstacle which blocks your way is what will give your way at last its true course and destiny. It is as if a careless stream were leaping boisterously down its familiar channel straight to the inviting sea, and should one day find a great piece of masonry set across its track, and the swift current detained in a sluggish pond with the end it was seeking far away. Ah, but that very blocking of the channel is what first gives the stream its real significance, and makes the current which had been hurrying to its own profitless pleasure a source of power that sweeps through the wheels of industry and converts the stream into a mighty instrument of service.

We know not whither we are going! What is it, then, that makes us walk steadily on such a mysterious way? This, in reality,

is what religion calls faith. It is walking by faith and not by sight. It is the acceptance of this life as one whose end is often not for us to see, but whose way is for the most part unobscured and sure. "How can I know," a man asks, "the way of my duty, until I see to what end my conduct is to lead?" Yet, even while he asks, there lies just before his feet the way of present duty, the obvious and immediate right. Beyond it, all may be in shadow; on it falls a gleam of light; and groping his way through the duty that is near, it is as if the shadowy road opened into a sunny clearing, and the man saw at last whither he was going, because step by step he had followed the way. That is moral faith, — the ethical assurance which commits itself to the right as the only way to reach the things which lie at the end of the right.

And the same thing is true of what we call religious faith. What Christianity brought into the world was not an oracle about the future, or an insurance system, but a method, an attitude of the mind, a responsiveness of the will, a way of life. "Come unto me," says Jesus, "and I do not say that your burdens shall drop away from you, and the yoke

be taken from your neck; but I do say that an attitude and habit shall become yours which, shall make the yoke you still have to carry better fitted to your neck, and the burden you still have to bear grow light. Come unto me; and I do not say that you shall have certainty among the problems of your thought, or deliverance from all your cares, but I do say that as you go the way will open into increasing light and peace."

We sit here in the quiet of our worship and wonder what the months and years of life may bring to us of chance and change. And behold, we do not know. Into what experiences of achievement or disappointment, of pleasure or pain, we may soon be led we cannot foresee; but all the more essential is it to find a way of life in following which one may be saved from illusion and held in security and peace. We do not know what is to happen to us; then all the more must we be ready for anything that may happen. We do not know to what our education is to open; then all the more rigorously we must prepare for unforeseen demands. We do not know how priceless one day may be our strength of will or purity of life; but how we shall

grieve if, when these things are the only human comfort, it turns out that they have run to waste along the careless way. We do not know when or where the wave of trouble is to sweep up against us as a great roller suddenly heaves up out of a tranquil sea; but just because of such awful surprises we build in cloudless days where the flood can never reach us, high up upon the rock.

That is the message of Jesus to many a life which wants to hear of other things, as the disciples wanted to know of that which Jesus did not reveal. Many a mystery of life and death is undisclosed by him, many a problem which distracts the mind is left unanswered; but along the way he opens moves forever the hope and peace of man. Not knowing whither we are going, we take our life and duty just as they come; and across all the uncertainties of joy and trouble, and achievement and regret, and life and death, that may await us, the voice of Jesus calls, "I am the way!"

V

THE EXPECTANT CREATION

The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. — *Romans* viii. 19.

THIS verse might be described as St. Paul's statement of the doctrine of evolution. Of course, it would be quite absurd to claim for him any clear expression of the modern teaching. The universe presents a very different picture to us from any which his mind could see. Moreover, St. Paul is thinking in this passage primarily of his own little church at Rome, and giving them the rule for their duty, or what he calls the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Yet, with the mind of a great philosopher, or rather with the vision of a great prophet, he is swept beyond the special case before him into the principle which it involves; and in giving rules to Rome he is led to survey the method of the world. The whole creation, he says, groans in pain until now. It bears within itself the burden of the life that is to follow. It is an expectant creation. It is

a prophetic world. It is working out a divinely appointed end. It manifests all along its course one great intention. It might have been St. Paul instead of Herbert Spencer who wrote: "The naturally revealed end toward which the Power manifested in evolution works." It might have been St. Paul instead of Tennyson who sang of

> "one far off Divine event
> Toward which the whole creation moves."

But what is this end of creation, for which it thus expectantly waits? The whole creation, answers the Apostle, is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God. And who are the sons of God? He has just told us in another verse: "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The sons of God, then, are simply people led by the spirit of God, and for such people the whole creation waits. Without them this universal evolution pauses in its course. Its movement begins under mechanical laws, and then at a certain point its purposes become personal, human, spiritual. It needs for this next step the help of man. Not God himself can develop the possibilities of human beings unless human beings help

Him. His final end is to be reached not by His laws, but by His sons. Creation, that is to say, waits for man to fulfil it. The work of God is in the hands of the sons of God. That is the doctrine of the text.

Here, for instance, is a vessel on the sea, eager to reach her port, with the wind sweeping favorably past her and inviting her to move on. And yet, not the fairest wind that God can send can bring her on her way, unless man does his part. The earnest expectation of the vessel waits until the captain spreads her sails; and then, man working with God, the craft that lay there lifeless and lonely on the sea becomes a thing of life and motion, and leaps on her way. So it is, says the Apostle, with all the higher ends of God's creation. The method of God works through the effort of man. God may create the best of circumstances, and yet that whole creation simply groans and labors, like a vessel — as we say — laboring in a sea, until man steadies it with his sails and spreads them to catch the breeze. The patient expectation of the vessel waits for the revealing of the captain's will.

I dwell on this great teaching of the need

of man to fulfil the work of God, because it really gives us the only interpretation of life which permits life to have any significance and interest. When one looks at his life just as it is, his first confession must be that it is a very unimportant and very uninteresting thing. What an aimless, ineffective, frivolous affair one's experience seems to be! "Here I am," you say, "with my infinitely unimportant life, influencing nobody, observed by nobody. Of what earthly importance is it that I should struggle thus against the stream of my tendencies and tastes? Why not yield myself to this stream of tendency, and let my turbulent passions bear me down on their unhindered current?" That is the unconscious defence of many a wasted life. For one person who sins by thinking too much of himself, ten, I suppose, fail by not thinking, in the true sense of the phrase, enough of themselves; by loss of that self-respect which comes of knowing one's place in the purposes of God.

Now, into the midst of this sluggish, half-hearted, spurious modesty comes this Apostle, and says to your soul: "Yes, taken by itself your life is certainly a very insignifi-

cant affair; but placed, as you happen to be placed, in the kind of universe which God has happened to make, your insignificant life becomes of infinite importance. For God has chosen to work out His designs not in spite of you, but through you, and where you fail there He halts." "Almighty God needs you!" — what a change that summons gives in all one's estimate of himself and his duty. It might seem a small thing to you to let your isolated or ineffective little life run to waste or to harm, but to run the risk of standing in the way of the mighty purposes of God and hindering in any degree the vast mechanism of creation, — that is a thought of indescribable solemnity. It is as if in some great factory, where the looms go weaving with their leaping shuttles the millions of yards of cloth, one little thread should snap, and the whole vast mechanism should stop abruptly lest the single flaw should mar the entire work.

Some of you may remember, at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our College, how the students marched in a great torchlight procession, with many original and amusing transparencies and banners, and how

the Freshman Class, then only a month old as students, carried at their head this motto: "The University has been waiting two hundred and fifty years for us." That was very amusing; but to any one who could read the deeper facts of the University, the motto conveyed a profound and solemn truth. All this great, historic, institutional life had been, indeed, slowly evolved for the sake of these newly arrived light-hearted boys, and now on their conduct were resting the destinies of the future, and out of their wise uses of their student life were to come our later blessings; and as one looked at them he could but say, not in jest but out of the prayer of his heart: "Yes, the earnest expectation of two hundred and fifty years is waiting for the revealing of what there is in you."

That is the solemn thought in which the least important of us ought to take up his life as he goes out of this place into the waiting world. It is not that you are to be great or notable in yourself or for yourself, but that you are to do your infinitely slight, yet absolutely essential part in the universal order. The movement of the purposes of God waits for the service which each son of God can

do. You may have gone some day with some pleasure-seeking company by the seashore to visit the lighthouse in the bay, and have been greeted by the rugged old light-keeper on his bare and sterile rock. Can any life be more solitary, or inconspicuous, or unpraised? Why does he sit there through weary nights to keep his little flame alive? Why does he not sleep on, all unobserved, and let his little light go out? Ah, but it is not his light. That is what gives him significance. He is not its owner, he is its keeper. That is his name. He is a light-keeper. The government which he serves has put into his hands this trust, and night after night, when lights which burn for themselves go out, the ships are guided safely on their way by that unknown light-keeper, whom every sailor can absolutely trust.

That is the story of many a life, — alone, unobserved, unpraised. Why not let your light go out and sit in the dark? Because it is not yours! You are a light-keeper. You have your place as a part of the great order which makes the world secure; and any night, while you sit there in the shadow,

the earnest expectation of many a storm-tossed life may be waiting for the revealing of your friendly gleam; and many a life, that passes by you all unseen in the dark, may be looking, from night to night, to you.

VI

BURDEN-BEARING

Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.

For each man shall bear his own burden. — *Gal.* vi. 2, 5.

THIS seems almost a contradiction. Bear ye one another's burden, says one verse, and then the other adds: Let each man bear his own. If the two verses were a little further apart one might fancy that the Apostle had forgotten one saying when he uttered the other; but as it is they are evidently parts of one proposition, opposite aspects of the same teaching. How to bear the burden of life, — that is the question with which the Apostle is dealing, and the two verses taken together must be regarded as a reply.

And, in the first place, the teaching of both verses is plainly this, — that here is a world where somehow burdens have to be borne. This does not mean that it is a hard or bad or sad world, but simply that it is a world of responsibility; a world in which

both happiness and usefulness are to be found, not by shaking off burdens, but by learning how to bear them. That is where many people make their first mistake. They think that happiness is in being relieved from burdens, and they spend a great part of their time in trying to avoid the burdens of life; but it turns out that the very responsibilities which seemed to burden life were in reality what enlarged it, and that when persons free themselves from responsibility then life itself becomes hard to bear. The burden of the life that has nothing to do afflicts with restlessness and weariness the self-indulgent man; and, having no work to do, he has to make work out of play, until at last he comes to say, as one famous Englishman said, that life would be tolerable if it were not for its amusements.

And then, besides the burdens which one can shake off but had better bear, there are others from which no life can escape. Into the midst of irresponsibility enter the trials which have to be borne, — the sicknesses and sorrows, the solitudes and regrets, of which each one has his share; and with them sometimes comes one of the hardest of hu-

man experiences, — the discovery that one has been living under a false theory of life. The man thought that this was to be a soft world and it turns out to be a hard world, and the soft theory of life has taken out of him what this Apostle calls the capacity "to endure hardness." There is nothing more pathetic to see than a person who thought no trouble could touch him smitten of a sudden by a great and inevitable blow, and the burdens of life laid on shoulders which have not been used to bearing any burden at all. Life, we might as well understand, is not easy, and the person who tries to play it is easy is simply courting disaster and despair.

That is the first truth which these two texts combine to teach. This is a world where, somehow, burdens have to be borne. But then, as the texts lie before us, this world of responsibility seems to be twofold. There is first the lightening of others' burdens, and then there is the manly bearing of one's own. There is the outer sympathy, and there is the inner solitude. Now, how is either of these ways of responsibility to be followed? What makes one able to bear

another's burdens; what makes one able to bear his own?

No sooner does one ask these questions than the texts which seemed to oppose each other begin to approach each other. For each of them needs the other to interpret it. Each is the key of the other. Each announces the way in which the other is to be obeyed.

Here, for instance, is a man who answers the first call of responsibility, — the call of the Christian life summoning him to bear another's burden. He wants to be of use among the distresses of the time. He has come to that happy hour when he discovers the joylessness of the self-centred life and the satisfaction of beneficence. He throws himself into the philanthropies and reforms of his time with a glad and impetuous generosity. But what is this strange discovery which he soon makes? It is the discovery of a certain incompetency and limitation which at first he hardly understands. He is not able to accomplish what he wants to do. He does not come into real contact with the experiences which he desires to help. He cannot reach the poor or the sad with his own experience or interpret their

problems and needs. They turn away from him as from a theorist and student instead of finding in him a supporting friend.

What is the limitation of this well-intentioned life? It is this, — that the man has not yet had his own burden to bear, and therefore cannot do much toward bearing the burden of another soul. Not every one who wants to help is capable of helping. The happiness of helpfulness is given only to those who have strongly and faithfully helped themselves. "Bear ye one another's burdens," says St. Paul. Ah, yes! But who is he that can obey that great command? The Master answers: "If any man will come after me, let him first of all take up his own cross and carry it." It is not only for your own salvation that your own cross is to be borne. It is because only the bearers of their own crosses are capable of being the saviours of other souls.

And so it is that some poor burdened life sits in the midst of its perplexity or poverty or sorrow, while a hundred voices try to be kind but speak as to the deaf, and a hundred philosophers come with their learning, and all their utterances seem like the lingering

echoes of some vanished truth; and then into the midst of this trouble there enters some life that does not philosophize or argue at all, but has bent under the same sort of burden and has struggled on into some imperfect sort of peace, and it touches the other's burden and lifts it, and its little word of courage reaches across the silence, and the ear of the deaf is unstopped and the tongue of the dumb sings, and the burden-bearing life says: "This man understands me and I yield to him. He has borne his own burden and so he helps me to bear mine."

That is one aspect of our texts. The capacity of being of serious service to others when they need it is given only to those who have had their own battles to fight and have come into some sort of victory. That, indeed, is the crowning power of the life of Jesus Christ over the hearts of men. He might have uttered all the great truths and done all the great deeds which are reported of him, and yet have failed to hold his unique relation to all experiences of trouble, duty, and need. His permanent power to be thus a burden-bearer for other souls comes from his having entered deeply into the human

experiences of temptation, misinterpretation, and suffering himself.

> "Christ leads me through no darker room
> Than he went through before,"

sings the Christian. "Tempted in all points as I am, yet without sin," repeats the man who is tried by misunderstanding, or animosity, or poverty, or pain. The cross of Jesus Christ is not the sign of his suffering only, it is the sign of his power and his capacity to save.

But now turn this whole teaching round and think of the demand laid on you to bear your own burden. Ask the question: "How am I to find the strength for that burden-bearing which no one else can share; for the solitudes of my own doubting, dreaming, aspiring soul; for the responsibilities, often as obscure as they are heavy, which are directly and irremovably laid on me?" Well, first of all, do not expect that these burdens are to be removed. Do not waste time in trying to shake them off. Your problem is, not to escape from responsibility, but to find strength to bear responsibility. "Each man must bear his own burden." But if any sense of peaceful strength is to come to you

under the burden which is thus laid on you, it is to come, strangely enough, not by absorbing yourself in your own task, but by turning from it to ways of helping others. This is the paradox of experience, — that the way to bear one's own burdens is to add to them the bearing of some one else's. The way out of your own trial is by entering into the trial of others. The introspective and self-absorbed sorrow grows heavier the longer you watch it, and the self-forgetting service of another lightens the burden which you yourself have to bear. The more you shirk, the more you have to bear. The more you add of others' responsibilities, the more you subtract from your own.

You remember that lovely French Countess of La Garaye, who rode forth one morning with her gay company to lead the hunt and was brought back an hour later thrown from her horse and crippled for life, and then how, after much repining at her lot, she joins with her husband in transforming their castle into a home for incurables like herself, until at last a new and solemn happiness blesses their burden-bearing home, and their lives become, as the poem says: —

"A tale of noble souls who conquered grief
By dint of tending suffering not their own."

That has been the story of multitudes of burdened souls. They have given themselves to the service of others, and then they have found their own burdens, not wholly taken away, but at least less overwhelming in their weight. They have found their lives when they lost them. They have conquered grief by dint of tending sufferings not their own.

My two texts, then, which seemed to give such opposite teachings, melt, at last, into a single truth, — a truth which takes this whole theme of responsibility, as it were, out of the darkness and sets it in the light. It is the truth which underlies all this recognition of a common burden, — the truth of a common strength and a common lift. It is all one life with which we have to do, and any lift anywhere counts for the whole. The heaviest part of the burden of life lies in the feeling that there are two burdens, the good of others and the good of one's self. This is what distracts life. A man does not know which way to turn. Ought he to give himself to self-culture, or ought he to give himself to self-sacrifice? Shall he study for his

own sake, or shall he work for others' sake? Shall he labor, or shall he pray? Which is the better, to be good or to do good? So we argue with ourselves, as if life were a hopeless dualism where at least one half of duty must be left undone.

But the fact is that no such chasm in life exists. One comprehensive principle of power holds up the burden of the world. Some serve by doing and some by being; some by bearing others' burdens, and some by bearing their own; but it is all one life, holding the thinker and the doer, the self-discipline and the generous service. Let any man carry his own burden, and he is doing much more than saving himself. He is perhaps making the best possible contribution to the strength of the common life. Let any man be lavish of his strength in serving others, and he is doing much more than helping others. He is reinforcing his own strength to carry his own burden.

Many a generous servant of the social good is smitten at times with a sense of helplessness, because he thinks that by his insufficient schemes alone his help is being given;

while all the time what gives more help than all his works and failures is the steadiness of his own burden-bearing and the lesson of his own self-control. Many a lonely wrestler with his own problems and fears, crying through the night to his unknown adversary, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me," believes himself isolated in that conflict and with no responsibility for other men; while all the time the best blessing that may come to him from such a solitary encounter may be the strength to be of use to other struggling souls. The world without is waiting to be saved by men thus disciplined within. Out of lives purified in such solitudes flows the cleansing of the time.

The little lake lies high up among the hills, holding its own burden, keeping its own sources pure, and just for this reason men come to it and use its water to supply the town below. It has kept itself clean and is therefore fit to serve the world. The springs have fed it that it may transmit its life. Its purity becomes the source of social health; out of its plenty the fountains of the city leap. It has tranquilly borne in its

quiet basin the burden of its own life, and so it is able to flow forth into the world, singing as it flows, "I have come that these also may have my life, and may have it abundantly."

VII

THE SCORNER

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. — *Psalm* i. 1.

THIS is an unexpected series of thanksgivings with which the Book of Psalms begins. "Blessed is the man," says this first verse of the first psalm, "who walks not with the ungodly, nor stands with the sinner, nor sits with the scornful," — the man, that is to say, who is free, first from unbelief, then from unrighteousness, and then from scorn. Irreligion, immorality, contempt, — these are the three states of mind which are classed together. Of the first two there has been no lack of condemnation; and certainly these two things, the ungodly thought and the sinner's life, are the first two things from which any serious mind would pray to be delivered. But to class the scorner with the unbeliever and the sinner, to add to ungodliness and unrighteous-

ness the third great sin of contemptuousness, — that seems at first sight surprising.

Yet there is, in reality, a quality and tendency about the way of the scornful which justifies the psalmist in his first thanksgiving. If the scorner does not exhibit all the fruits of the ungodly and the sinner, he is at least living at the roots of both these more obvious faults, and his sin is much the most deceptive and insidious of the three. Sometimes the scorner is audacious in his sin. To see the right and despise it, to know the good and to turn from it with scorn, to be contemptuous toward that which is sacred, — that is the most hopeless state of sin into which a man can fall. It is the great refusal. It puts life beyond the reach of being helped. It refuses to be redeemed. It is what Jesus called the sin against the Holy Ghost, which, as he says, by its very nature shuts out forgiveness in this world and the world to come.

But the scorner does not often proceed so defiantly as this. It is only the very worst of men who deliberately face the right and spit at it, or consciously confess the wrong and glory in it. Many a man, however, who would never defy his conscience misreads

and deceives it. He calls his wrong right; he justifies his passion and excuses his sin; and then, one day, he wakes as in a fortress which is impregnable to foes from without and finds himself a helpless captive to a conspiracy within.

Now in all this tortuous and insidious approach of wrong-doing, what is the first sign which betrays the conspiracy? It is the scorner's frame of mind. A young man begins to hear moral distinctions dealt with lightly, and the things that were holy in his home made common and unclean; he grows callous to the finer touches of instinct and affection, and superior to the standards that once controlled him; finally, his reverence for these things is lost in the contagion of contempt, and he is sitting with his fellows in the seat of the scornful. No sign of youth is so disheartening as this first growth of scorn, — that sudden growth of worldly wisdom which transforms many a wholesome boy into a man of affectation and *ennui*. It is a transition which at first has about it a touch of something ludicrous, — the fine assumption that the world is a pricked bubble, — but it is in reality the beginning of many

a tragedy. It is the first step toward standing in the way of sinners and walking in the counsel of the ungodly.

And what is the characteristic attitude of the scorner's mind? The psalmist points it out. He speaks of the scorner as sitting in his seat. That is precisely what describes him. There is no activity, no accomplishment, no positive contribution, in the scorner. He is the neutral, the stay-at-home, the copperhead, in the warfare of life. While others are fighting the battle of good or evil he remains there sitting in his seat. I do not say that such neutrality is as bad as positive wickedness. The seat of the scornful is not so degrading a place as the counsel of the ungodly. The sneak is not so vicious as the sinner. Yet there is something peculiarly aggravating in the scorner as he sits there in his seat. He might be good but for his lack of enthusiasm; he might be great but for his habit of contempt. The same superiority to emotion which keeps him from some forms of sin keeps him from all forms of service. The seat of the scorner has often been a seat of learning. When metals are refined they must be heated, but when men are it seems

sometimes as if they must be cooled. The dilettante, critical mind is the easiest victim of a cultivated neutrality. The habit of the scholar easily develops spiritual nearsightedness. In the midst of a world of knowledge waiting to be explored, and a world of conduct waiting to be redeemed, what is there more pitiful than to see the scorner of the academic world still sitting in his seat?

And what is the scorner looking at, as he sits, inactive and afar? If you watch him, you will see that he is looking down. He is the superior person with the downward look of contempt. He may be despising folly, or ignorance, or sin, yet it is as one who sits above them and looks down on them. That is the scorner. The world that interests him is below him; he does not stoop to lift it, — he simply sits in his seat and scorns it.

And what is it that can save any man from the sin of scorn? It is the habit of living among things and thoughts toward which one cannot look down, but must look up. The scorner scorns because he has nothing to revere. He despises things which are beneath his feet. Deliverance from scorn can come only by one's attachment to things

which cannot be looked upon at all except with reverence, loyalty, and awe. The service of that which is great redeems one from the scorn of that which is small. What is it that shall save a young man from his *blasé* manner, his distrust of motives, his jaunty skepticism, the affectation of vices which he does not possess? Nothing but the discovery of a kind of work which demands of him more than he can offer, and to which he must look up. Sometimes such a young man seems incurably affected by this scorn of earnestness; and then one day his life wakes, and he goes over from the ranks of the scorners, and his disdain melts in the flame of a new desire.

This is precisely what the psalmist says of the religious life. Speaking of the man who is neither the unbeliever nor the sinner nor the scorner, he says of him: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord." Here we have the two elements of rational religion: the law of the Lord, and man's delight in that law; a rule of life to which one must look up, and a reverent joy in obeying that rule. What is it that seems to paralyze many fresh young lives, so that instead of being natural

and buoyant they are artificial and contemptuous? It is that they have found no law in which they delight, no sufficient object for their enthusiasm, no attachment for their reverence, nothing to tie to but themselves. But suppose that into the midst of an unattached life there sweeps the power of a religious faith; suppose that behind the routine and drudgery of life which tempts to scorn there is discerned the law of the Lord in which one may delight, — then life is enlarged and its details become significant, and the seat of the scorner no longer detains the soul.

It is the same impulse which draws a planet in its orbit round the sun. It is the force of attraction exercised by that which is infinitely larger than one's self. It is the gravitation of the life toward God. Just as the world we live in finds its place under that supreme attraction, so each human soul swings into place under the law of the Lord. It is set free from its contemptuousness when it finds its orbit round the larger centre. It is delivered from the downward look, because it is in the presence of that which draws it to look up. Blessed is the man who is thus

blessed; he yields himself to the law of attraction, and finds his place in the universe of God. He sits no longer in the seat of the scornful, for his delight is in the law of the Lord.

VIII

THE GOD OF THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS

Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand. — 1 *Kings* xx. 28.

THIS story takes us far back into the primitive history of Israel, when she is fighting for her life against the greater nations about her, and when Jehovah proves himself the God of Israel by the wholesale slaughter of her enemies. The Syrians have come down like the wolf on the fold, with an army, as the passage says, "greater than all the handfuls of dust in Samaria;" but Ben Hadad, the king of Syria, "he and the thirty-two kings that helped him" are — the story goes on — drunk in their pavilion, and the Syrians are defeated that day with a great slaughter. Yet their generals are not disheartened. They fall back on the theory of a tribal and localized God, and report to their king that

they have attacked the God of Israel in that God's peculiar stronghold. "He is a God," they say, "of the hills, therefore the Israelites were stronger than we. Let us fight against them on the plains, and surely we shall be stronger than they."

So, at the return of the year, the Syrians come again with a great host, and the people of Israel are before them "like two little flocks of kids, while the Syrians fill the country." Then there comes to the king of Israel a man of God, saying: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, am I like the gods of these heathen, to be the stay of my people on the hills, and not their staff on the plains? Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" "Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." It is like that more familiar story of the sturdy Greeks resisting the hosts of Persia, and how that day

> "A king sat on the rocky brow
> Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
> And ships, by thousands, lay below,
> And men in nations, — all were his!

He counted them at break of day —
And when the sun set, where were they?"

Such is the story of this fierce warfare and its rude evidence of Jehovah, — the bloody victory of a tribal God. A hundred thousand Syrians, the story with splendid exaggeration says, were slain that day. Yet, even thus early in Israel's history, we begin to see a truth emerging, of whose final issue the nation itself hardly dreamed. The Lord, said the Syrians, is God of the hills, but not of the valleys. Not so, said Israel. If He is to be found on the hills, He must be at their foot also; and not to find Him in the valleys is to lose Him everywhere. It was the first step away from the conception of a localized and limited deity toward the higher and universal theism. And how dramatic it is to notice that, centuries afterwards, in this same country of Samaria and among these very hills where Syria was once defeated, there was taken the one further step in this evolution of the idea of God, and the God of both hills and valleys became at last the God of all human souls. The woman of Samaria stands there by the well that opens at the foot of Mount Gerizim, and says: "Our fathers wor-

shipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem men ought to worship;" and Jesus — in perhaps the greatest words in human history — answers: "Woman, the hour cometh when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

As one pauses a moment in this busy world and thinks of life as it lies all unexplored before him, is it not somewhat as it was with the king of Syria and his host as they looked over into the unconquered land of Israel? There are the hills and valleys of the future, stretching away with their light and shadow, inviting and beautiful; but who can say what lies beyond, or how barren those summits are which catch the sun, or how dark are the valleys which lie between? And the God who is to protect us, — is He to be a God of the hills or of the valleys? Is our religion to serve us when we come to need it on the great critical summits of experience, or is it to be a faith which has been nurtured in the valleys, and so comes to its victory upon the hills?

I do not say, in answer to these hopes and fears about the future, that there may not be revealed to some of us extraordinary disclosures on unfrequented heights. Yet it is certain that such experiences are very rare. For the most part, what people do in an emergency is not suggested by the emergency itself. The emergency abruptly discloses the instincts and habits which have been acquired and cultivated in uneventful days. A business man, for instance, comes to a critical decision, and makes that decision unhesitatingly, out of the resources of a mind trained in a thousand smaller problems which now seem to have been given him to prepare his way for wisdom in the one great affair. A young man comes up out of the valley of commonplace to some great problem of duty. How shall he choose the eternal before the temporal, the spiritual before the fleshly? Sometimes there comes, thank God, an unanticipated help to him upon the height itself. Yet such immediate reinforcement is one of the miracles of experience. The strength of most men on the hilltop is the strength which has been nurtured below. If God has not been a God of the valleys, the

hills will be once more the scene of a Syrian self-deception and a Syrian defeat. The soul stands helplessly on the bleak hilltop and gropes about for a support which simply does not grow on that bare rock. God has not been a God of the valleys, and so He hides Himself in the fastnesses of the hills. And then, on the other hand, there is the life which has in it no such dreadful surprises. The same God that gave fidelity in routine and patience in obscurity now gives firmness in the great decision or self-control among the temptations of success. God has been with the man in the valleys; and so, when in its supreme moments the instincts of life are laid bare, God meets the man again as he goes up to the hills.

I am speaking, then, under this figure of ancient warfare, of the meaning of the unnoticed days, and the place of the commonplace conflicts, and the significance of the insignificant people; and such days, and such conflicts, and such people make up — do they not? — most of life for us all. I do not say that we see across the frontier of the future any great or startling issues of life, any Alpine heights to tempt us, or fearful

gorges to explore. For the most part, I suppose, we see before us little more than an ordinary landscape, much like that which the Syrians saw when they looked over into Israel, — the rolling country of an average experience, the joys and pains of common human life.

Indeed, that is what makes one's life sometimes seem most difficult, — that it is so far from being dramatic, or exceptional, or picturesque. It might be very exciting to be a hero, or very picturesque to be a rogue; but just to be an average man or woman, — that seems a sort of life not needing much heroism, or likely to be a subject for the preachers. Most of our sermons bid us look up — and rightly — to the lofty experiences, the crises of life and death; and most of our sympathy — and rightly — bids us look down into the depths of misfortune and trouble and pain; but there is little to stir the imagination or the will in the life that just trudges along through quiet hills and valleys. Yet, for once, let us be sure of this, — that the preparedness which is undismayed in the battle on the hills issues from the sanctifying of the days which seem so un-

warlike below. The hypocritic days, says Emerson, —

> "To each they offer gifts after his will, —
> Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
> I, in my pleachèd garden saw the pomp,
> Took a few herbs and apples, and the day
> Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
> Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn."

I see, then, the average life going its way, not as a soldier to the excitements of a battlefield, but as a plain man to his field of commonplace duties, as a ploughman in his low and level field walks the furrow of his daily task. I see from end to end of this plain duty the God of the valleys steadying the ploughman's hand to keep his furrow true. And then, some day, — I know not when, but some day soon for all, — I see this average life called to go up out of the level of its routine to the solemn exigencies of experience; up to the misty region of solitude or trial, where it is hard for any life to find the way alone. And then I see the significance of the average life. It was the time to cultivate the habit of companionship with God. God has been a God of the valleys, and therefore, when the great desire of the soul is to

find the way among those unfamiliar heights, God is there also. It may not be that the mists are wholly withdrawn, so that the way is made perfectly plain, but at least the cloud sweeps back from time to time and shows the path before one's feet; and the lonely traveller on the heights knows well that the breeze which thus clears his way is nothing less than the kindly breath of the God of the hills.

IX

PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. — *Matt.* iii. 3.

NO other figure in the New Testament is so dramatic or picturesque as that of John the Baptist, — the preparer, as he says, of the way of the Lord. The other persons who group themselves round Jesus — Peter, John, James, and the rest — seem to have impulses and affections not unlike our own; but this strange figure of the Baptist, weird, half clad, a hermit of the wilderness, seems to belong to a world entirely remote from modern life. The first impression we get of him is of a belated representative of Old Testament ideas, — a prophet, ascetic, denunciatory, severe. "O generation of vipers," he says, as if he were Malachi or Jonah, "who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

But the Baptist himself persistently refuses to be called a man of the Old Testament. He persistently looks forward into the New

Testament. He associates himself with that which is to come, and for which he is to prepare the way. It is not that he is to be important in that future. He does not even count himself a person who belongs to the new order. He is but a "voice" crying of him whose triumph he is not to see. He is not worthy to unloose the shoes of him who is to follow. He is to decrease, while the other is to increase. Yet the only glory he desires is the mission of preparing the way. He does his work so that a greater work than his shall through it find an entrance into the world. He might have stood as the last of the Old Testament prophets, as a figure stands out, at sunset, on some western hilltop, facing the fading light; but he prefers to stand in the dawn of the new morning, to look eastward out of the darkness toward the place where the sun will rise, and then to fall back into the shadow while the sun illuminates the world. That is the nobility of the Baptist, — to efface himself and find significance in that which is to come after him. He is the prophet of the Advent, crying in the wilderness of the Lord who is to come.

Of course, it is not given to many men to stand thus at a great historic moment between an old world and a new. And yet this attitude of the Baptist toward the Christ, anticipatory, self-effacing, preparatory, is what interprets and sustains many a modern man. Suppose, for instance, that you have just finished your education, and are entering on your professional life. In a certain sense you are the heir of all the ages of learning. For you the past has yielded its fruits of languages and sciences and laws; for you the University has grown and striven. Thus a man finds himself here at the end of a long historic evolution, and with a great hope and dignity enters into his own intellectual life. But how soon his work begins to shut in about him; how it shrivels into routine; how his hopes are thwarted; until the more he thinks of himself as the heir of all the ages, the more insignificant the outcome seems!

When one realizes all this, what is he to do to save himself from despondency, restlessness, self-contempt, despair? Why, let him face the other way; from the past which he inherits to the future for which he prepares the way. "Not for me," he has to say,

"the distinction and success; not for me the sense of summing up in any work of mine the labors of the past! All that must be put away as a foolish, boyish dream. A very humble, imperfect, scattering, smattering work is the best that I can do." Yet even as one dismisses these dreams of great achievement he turns his face to the future, and the thought that he may prepare the way for the better things that are to follow illuminates his own little task with dignity and joy. He and his work are to pass away and to be forgotten; after him are to come those that are preferred before him; but the better that is to come is to come only because he has done his best.

Sometimes a visitor from an American college finds himself among the nobler buildings of an English university, and he compares them with the Puritan severity of our halls, which Mr. Lowell called the "Muse's factories." It seems as if a deeper affection ought to gather round those ancient and splendid monuments of English piety and learning, just as the ivy is deeper on their walls. What does it mean, then, that with all this historic completeness on the one hand, and all this

modern incompleteness on the other, there are thousands of men who love the simple traditions of our American colleges with a passionate attachment nowhere surpassed? It is because men feel a peculiar interest in a place whose great days are to be looked for in the future rather than to be recalled as of the past. There, it seems as if nothing more could be done; here, it seems as if everything were still to be done. It is delightful to be the heir of a great academic history; but it is much more stirring to have one's part in the creation of the future's intellectual life. There is a glory in perfectness; but, as one of our own scholars has said, there is also "a glory of the imperfect." It is better to be the John the Baptist of the future than to live in the afterglow of the greatness that is past. The best inspiration of any man in our own academic life to-day is this, — that the imperfect service of the present Harvard may prepare the way by which the possible Harvard may some day enter in.

And this which is true of intellectual interests is very often not less true of the whole experience of life. Every man's life

is in one sense an end, and in another sense a beginning. The past leads up to it, the future leads away from it; and one may think of his life as facing either way. The trouble, however, is that when you think of all the purposes of your life as ending in yourself, they seem to end in so little. Your ambition, after all, is unattained; your ideals are unrealized; your mistakes multiply; and your poor little muddled, unheroic life seems a pitiful outcome of the mighty evolution of the past. That is what tempts many persons to despair and scorn about the movement of the world. What a poor world it is, they say, that only comes to this! What a miserable end of things it is which issues into the insignificant me! "The worldly hope," says the Persian poet, —

> "The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
> Turns ashes — or it prospers; and anon,
> Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
> Lighting a little hour or two, is gone.
>
> "A moment's halt — a momentary taste
> Of being from the well amid the waste —
> And lo! — the phantom caravan has reached
> The nothing it set out from. Oh, make haste!"

Ah! but suppose that this is not the way

to understand your life. Suppose that not what you accomplish, or bear, or suffer, is the key to your experience, but this, — that through what you accomplish, or bear, or suffer, some other life may have more effectiveness or patience or endurance or peace! Others may increase, you may decrease; and your life, which is so inexplicable by itself, may get its meaning through that for which it prepares the way. What justifies it may be, not that which it achieves, but that which it makes possible. It offers itself to that better future, as the little stream offers itself to the river beyond, as though it sang to itself: —

> "It is better to sit at the fountain's birth
> Than a sea of waves to win,
> To live in the love that floweth forth,
> Than the love that cometh in."

Each patient service of to-day repeats the Master's prophecy: "Greater things than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father;" each best of to-day makes ready for the better best that is to follow; each self-effacing service of the present world prepares through the wilderness of to-day the way for the Lord of the future to come, and makes his path straighter into the hearts of men.

X

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

The perfect law, the law of liberty. — *James* i. 25.

THE law of liberty, — that sounds at first like a contradiction. What is law but a limiting of liberty? What is liberty but an escape from law? Law shuts you in; liberty lets you out. The law of the State restricts the liberty of the citizen; the laws of nature hamper the freedom of the will. How, then, can the Apostle say that the perfect law brings liberty? He means, I suppose, that the only real liberty in life is to be found, not outside of law, but through it. A country without law — the country of the anarchist — is not necessarily a free country. It may be, on the contrary, a place of the most savage despotism. A world without law would not necessarily give greater play to the freedom of man. On the contrary, it would be simply a chaos of disorder, where there would be no scope for liberty. What, then, is the relation of liberty

to law? It is this, — that while some laws shut in and enslave life, other laws broaden and enlarge life. One is set free as he passes from one kind of law to the other. Liberty is allegiance to the higher law.

We speak, for instance, of a free country. What is a free country? Not a country where people may do just as they please. A country may put people in prison and yet be a free country. It may restrict or prohibit certain forms of business and yet be a free country. Its liberty is not a liberty without law. It is a free country because its laws give every citizen a chance to do his best. Life is open at the top. There is, not equality of condition, but equality of opportunity. The transfer from the lower to the higher rules of life is easy. In so far as a State does this it is a free State. Its law is a law of liberty.

Or we speak, again, of a liberal education. What is a liberal, or liberating, education? It is not an education without law. On the contrary, the liberally educated man has submitted himself to discipline and learned the scope and authority of law. Intellectual liberty means freedom from sordid, commercial, or disingenuous views of life, and the trans-

fer of interest and loyalty to permanent ideals of truth or goodness or beauty. In so far as one has thus transferred his allegiance from narrowing and shifting interests to broadening and ideal interests, he is liberally educated. He has found the law of liberty.

But the Apostle in this passage is not writing of politics or of education. He is writing of religion; and he is describing just what religion undertakes to do. Here you are, he means to say, all shut in by the small laws of life, and its petty, engrossing, enslaving interests, so that your life seems to have no scope or vision or quality about it, and you need to get up into the region of some higher law, where you can look out more broadly over life. I heard a while ago of a club in one of our great cities called the A. B. C. This rather elementary title had been taken from one of Henry Drummond's suggestions, that people ought to live, as he said, in their "upper stories;" and these young people, who were wanting to live for something higher than their merely social round of pleasure and companionship, called themselves "The Anti-Basement Club." It was their pledge of transfer to higher levels

of life; as if they had heard the great word of the parable: "Friend, go up higher!"

But when one thus accepts the principle of the A. B. C. and goes into the "upper stories" of life, what is the law that meets him there? It is the law of liberty. Sometimes we wonder precisely what our religion does for us. It does not answer all our questions; it does not feed us or support us or free us from trouble and care. Well, then, what does it do? It gives us a law of liberty. It sets us free from the lower interests which threaten to master our lives. God comes to a human soul and says: "My child, give me thy heart;" and in that allegiance to the higher law the petty interests and cares which were dominating life let go their hold, and the soul enters into the law of liberty. What is the problem of life, but just this transfer of the heart's desire, from the shut-in sense of routine, from the basement of life, to the refreshment and strength of the clearer, higher air; and what is liberty except the exhilarating emancipation of that new ideal?

"The freer step, the fuller breath,
The wide horizon's grander view,

The sense of life that knows no death,
The Life that maketh all things new."

Sometimes there happens on the ocean an experience, entirely familiar to sailors, but which always has in it something beautiful and strange. A vessel, some day, is lying, as seamen say, stark-becalmed, powerless to reach her harbor; but, as the sailors wait and watch, they notice that while there is no ripple on the water or breeze upon their faces, the little pennant far up at the mast-head begins to stir and ripple out. 'The breeze is all aloft, they say.' It does not strike down upon the surface of the sea. At once they spread their upper sails, to catch the current which is all unfelt below, and very quietly, straight across a sea which looks hopelessly flat and calm, the vessel holds right on under the impulse of that upper air. So, sometimes, the spirit of God moves over the lives of men: —

"All powerful as the wind it comes,
As viewless too,"

and in the lower levels of life all is still motionless. You seem to be under the dominion of a law which chains you in its flat and dull monotony. You feel no breath of the spirit

on your cheek. But aloft is stirring the current of the higher law; and the life that spreads its upper sails finds itself borne along as by a miracle across the flatness of life, under the breeze which is at once both Law and Liberty.

XI

THE DEPARTING GLORY

Thou shalt stand upon the rock, and . . . I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back: but my face shall not be seen. — *Exodus* xxxiii. 21–23.

THIS is a graphic, Oriental, dramatic way of describing what happens in many a life. Moses wants to be perfectly sure that God is with him, and prays: "Show me Thy ways; show me Thy glory;" but Jehovah answers: "That I cannot do, for it is not possible for a man to look straight into My face and live. But I will do this: I will set thee in a cleft of the rock as My glory approaches thee, and will hold My hand before thine eyes as I pass by, and then, as I depart, I will take My hand away and thou shalt see the vision of the departing glory." To see the truth of things as they were going away, to be hidden in a rocky cleft with a hand before his eyes, and to know the glory and greatness of experience only when it was

over, — that was as near as Moses could come to the direct revelation of the presence of his God.

Is it not much the same with almost every life? A man sees some special incident of his experience approaching him, — a young man looks out into the years of his college life; a young woman pauses and asks herself the meaning of her hurrying, busy, happy winter, — and they eagerly desire to be perfectly sure of the presence and guidance of their God. "Show me Thy ways," they cry; "show me Thy glory." "Let the meaning of life be disclosed to me while it is yet here." "Oh, to discern, amid the hurry and routine and frivolity and insignificance of life the immediate signs of what is sacred and divine!" But how often it happens that one is not permitted to see this great light shining into his little life. It is as if a hand were placed before one's eyes and he was held in a cleft of the rock, so that the routine and commonplace of life barred out the heavenly vision. The college year slips by, the busy winter vanishes, with no sense of glory in them, but only thoughtlessness or dulness or overwhelming care. And then, some day, just as

such experiences depart, the hand is taken away from one's eyes, and he recognizes how beautiful and gracious had been the privilege which had been so slightly used and which is now but a departing glory.

Thousands of men all over this country look back in precisely this way on the college-days which they once had at their command. While they were here they lived without adequate appreciation of the liberty and poetry and charm of it all; shut within the little cleft of their own set or interest or immaturity; but as these days recede their brightness is revealed, and they take on a peculiar color and charm; and all through the soberer years of later life a man says to himself: "Those, after all, were the golden days, — the years of sheer delight and of irresponsible joy."

And all this is equally true of the more serious experiences which come to every life. You are set some day in the valley of shadow, where you have to meet anxiety or solitude or trouble or care; and, with a new terror in your voice, you cry to God: "What does this mean? If Thou art here, show me Thy glory. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But there comes to you no open vi-

sion. The shadow covers the cleft so wholly that it is as black as night about you, and it seems as if the sun were totally and permanently eclipsed. Yet how often it happens that as the experience goes away the light of it shines in. The meaning you could not read as it approached becomes plain as it departs. It was not that God had forsaken you in the darkness, but that He held His hand before your face; and — just as the shadow creeps from the face of the sun and the light comes back after an eclipse — so, by degrees, the hand is taken from your face and you begin to understand what your trouble meant and to catch a glimpse of the departing glory. "What I do," says Jesus, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The truth which was undisclosed while it was present is often discovered when it has gone away. "It is expedient for you," says Jesus again, "that I go away, that so the spirit of the truth may come to you;" and many a life has learned the truth by seeing a departing glory.

Now what does this mean, — this postponement of recognition, this receding revelation, this glory discerned as it departs?

At first sight, here is much of the pathos of life, much indeed of its irony and tragedy. Why must we learn so many of life's lessons when it is too late to profit by them? If I had only known, you say, the meaning of each step in life while I was taking it; if God had but shown me His glory in time — then I might have been wise; but to see the departing glory, the receding truth in things that did not show me their face, — what is this but to be filled with fruitless shame and regret? In my cleft in the rock how could I ever dream that God was passing by, and what could I do but sit there in the dark?

But in reality this is not the irony of life; it is its way of wisdom and progress and peace. What is the reason that one does not discern the full glory of the present life? It is precisely, as God said to Moses that day, because a man cannot look straight into God's face and live. Suppose that at each incident of life you were permitted to see the whole far-reaching issue of each day, each act, each word, just as God sees them, complete and awful in their consequences, watching the influences ripple out from each slight-

est utterance as one throws a pebble into a still lake and sees the ripples circle to the shore; — would you be strengthened, cheered, encouraged, by such a revelation? On the contrary, it would be simply a paralyzing, overwhelming, unendurable disclosure. It would be as if the full glare of sunlight flashed straight into your eyes, not to illuminate but to dazzle and blind. What would become of all the confidence, light-heartedness, hope, and joy of life if one were permitted thus to see the infinite significance of each passing hour?

Sometimes one wishes that a boy could see life as an older man sees it. But in reality that would be no blessing to the boy. It would simply make him morbid, anxious, timid, prematurely old, instead of fearless, natural, healthy-minded, as he ought to be. Nothing could be more contrary to reality than to try to force into the life of youth experiences and thoughts of age. It is natural and right for youth to be thoughtless and free; and God's hand is held before the face of many a young man, — not because God grudges him the vision, — but because he is not ready for it. There are some things

which have to be hidden in order to be learned, as a wise master withholds the answer till the problem is worked out. There are some things which cannot be flashed into life without blinding it. The mercy of God to Moses was as real when He held the hand before his face, as when He showed him the departing glory.

And that brings us to the real problem of human life. It is not — as so many people seem to think — an explanation of experience; it is, on the contrary, an education through experience. God does not expect people never to make mistakes and never to stumble in the dark; He expects them only to be taught by their mistakes, and to stumble on through the dark, until in His own time He shows them His glory. The legitimate cry of man to God is not: "Show me at once Thy glory, or I will cease to worship Thee;" but it is this: "Make me able to wait until the light which hardly penetrates into the cleft where I am set discloses to me some day its departing glory."

Each of us is set in a very small cleft of a very large world, and no one of us can see the whole horizon; but as each day's glory goes

away the light of it illuminates our memory and suggests our hopes. And so the insignificant life gets meaning, and the darkened life gets light, and the lonely life gets companionship; and we walk, as the Bible says, not by sight but by faith. That is the meaning of the limitations and mysteries of life. They are the hand of God held gently before the eyes. And that, finally, may be the difference between the life of earth and the life of heaven. "Here," says Paul, "we see in a mirror, by reflection, imperfectly;" there, we may be strong enough to see God face to face, and to know as we are known. Here, we are in the cleft of the rock; there, we may survey the whole horizon. Here, faith; there, sight. "On earth the broken arc; in heaven the perfect round." Here, the departing glory; there, the promise of the Book of Revelation, that we shall see His face, and be satisfied, when we awake, with His likeness.

XII

SPIRITUAL FRONTAGE

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God. — *Daniel* vi. 10.

AS one travels through the countries which the Old Testament describes — through Syria or Arabia or Egypt — he is apt to see a very strange and impressive sight. He stands watching the sun drop behind the violet hills and the shadows lengthening across the tawny plain, and far away on the desert he sees a solitary Arab guiding his camel over the yellow waste. The sun sinks and this lonely traveller halts, dismounts, and spreads his little carpet on the sand. He is all unconscious that any human eye is on him; all he thinks of is that his hour of prayer has come. He turns himself toward the point where he believes that his holy city of Mecca lies, and while his tired beast drops into welcome rest he

bows and prostrates and uplifts himself in absorbing prayer, a dark and miniature silhouette cut against the evening sky.

The first impression of such a scene is its awful and tremendous solitude. Here is a single human being on this sea of sand, alone with his God. In a moment, however, you remember that such worship is never solitary. It is, on the contrary, the one thing that takes from the lonely camel-driver all sense of solitude. He knows that in every part of the Mohammedan world, throughout India and Persia and Turkey and northern Africa, millions of men are bending with him in the same fading light, all facing on converging lines to the same central holy spot, the city of the Prophet; and as he repeats with this great multitude his simple prayers, he is taken up out of his solitude into the companionship of a common faith.

The same instinct which makes these Arabian races turn to their sacred place was moving the prophet Daniel in this passage. What Mecca is to them, Jerusalem was to him. It was his holy city, and he a captive in far-away Babylon. He is homesick for his lost temple; he longs for his home-worship.

So he gets him a dwelling fronting toward the city of his God, and as he prays he looks out across the open view, as though his prayers could cross the desert and touch the walls of Zion. He faces westward, under the same impulse which made the builders of the great Christian cathedrals place their altars at the east end, so that worshippers in Europe should face toward that same holy land and holy city.

Now, there may well seem to us much that is outgrown and superstitious in thus caring which way a worshipper should face. Every land, we say, is holy. All windows open on sacred scenes. The Meccas and Jerusalems of our worship are not walled cities, they are invisible and inward sources of inspiration. And yet it remains true that this principle of the outlook of the soul, the habitual frontage of one's life and thought, is still the most preliminary question of religion. Just as your home or room is valuable as it looks south or north, as it faces sunny fields or sunless alleys, so the first principle of the mind or soul is that it shall face the right way; and the difference between spiritual health and spiritual disease

is often not so much a matter of opinion, or creed, as of spiritual frontage.

Here, for instance, are two men who belong to the same political party; they assent to the same platform; they vote for the same candidate; they cheer at the same meeting; and yet, the motives which govern their minds are absolutely opposed. To one the party means the principle of reform, the security of trade, the permanence of our institutions; to the other it means the keeping of his own place, the hiding of his own crime, the price for his own vote. They are like people who live on opposite sides of the same street. In a certain sense they are near neighbors, and yet their points of view are directly opposite. One faces north, the other south. One looks toward the sun, the other toward the shadow. Each of them finds in the party which he opposes many persons much more like him than some who vote by his side. They do not vote for the same ticket, but they vote for the same ideas. They are not such near neighbors, but they do look out on the same view.

Or take the sympathies which people sometimes feel in religion and which are often

quite perplexing. Now and then you fall in with a person whose religious convictions are apparently very far removed from your own, but with whom you feel the subtle sympathy of a congenial soul. If your only association had been that of doctrinal discussion, you would have found no common ground of conviction; but what surprises you is the discovery, in spite of radical differences of opinion, of a common outlook. Worship means the same thing to you both; the windows of your souls open the same way; and you find more genuine sympathy with this believer in another creed than with many who stand very near you in opinion, but who stand, as it were, back to back with you and look out on different views.

Thus it happens that the first questions, even if not the greatest, which any soul should ask of itself are not: Where do I stand? What do I believe? What have I attained? but rather the much more elementary questions: Which way do I face? What is the habitual outlook of my mind and heart? Is there, indeed, any such outlook, past all the details and drudgery of life, toward any holy Jerusalem to which I turn in prayer?

And here is the threatening peril of this as of every age. You may hear people warning you against the tendencies of the time in philosophy, or science, or theology, as if the worst thing that could happen was some fresh outlook of the soul, some new Jerusalem, some change in the heart's loyalty. But the real peril of the age is not in finding some new outlook. It is the possibility that among the engrossing interests of modern life there shall be no outlook at all; no open window of the mind, no holy city of the soul, the shutters of life closed, the little things crowding out the great ones, and the soul all unaware of the sunshine and landscape which lie at its very door. That is the materialism from which any life might pray to be set free, the practical materialism which curses American life, — the shut-in, self-absorbed, unspiritualized, unhallowed life, the life without ideals, the windows toward Jerusalem closed and barred, and the man within so busy that he has no time to look out to any distant tower of a sanctifying thought.

Now, into this kind of life, absorbed, self-interested, overburdened, religion comes with its peculiar and precious gift. The first

thing which religion does for many a weary and hemmed-in life is not to give it an absolute conviction, or a stable creed, but simply to open the windows that look out upon a larger world. With all the incompleteness of your intellectual convictions or your moral decisions, this at least has come to pass, — that you are facing the right way and across the sterile details of your daily life are able to lift up your eyes to the distant hills of holiness and reverence and love.

How certain it is that among those who have gathered here — coming, as many of us come, carelessly, thoughtlessly, with hardly any consciousness of deep desire — there are some who in their hearts want, of all things, this broader outlook of the soul. How shut-in our life becomes from week to week; how absorbed in the inexorable pressure of social ambitions and demands! How short a distance we can see toward the great aims of life! The cares of this world and the lust of other things have grown up about us, as trees grow up about one's home, until they shut out the sun, and whatever way we look, there are only shadow and obstruction. And then, some day, on some quiet afternoon, perhaps,

like this, you go up in meditation into the upper chamber of your thought, and look out for a moment beyond the things which shut you in, and it is as if a vista opened through the upper branches toward the far horizon. There are the ideals and dreams, which you thought had disappeared forever — remote but clear, like distant towers in the evening light. You look out from these upper windows of the soul to these distant persuasions of the holy life, through the opening vista you send your quiet thought of consecration, and back across the spiritual sky there comes to you the returning sunshine of God's illuminating love.

XIII

THE GREATER PURITANISM

These all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. — *Heb.* xi. 39, 40.

THIS is a very remarkable view of the place and office of the Old Testament. The heroes of that dispensation, according to this writer to the Hebrews, were all witnesses of faith. Their history was a religious history. From Abel to the prophets, all had lived and died in faith, and what they had achieved was done under the living sense of the authority of God. Yet they never completed their own work; they never realized their own ideal; they did not receive the promise. They did things which seemed to later generations unjustifiable and deplorable. Through this varied history of spiritual vision and sensual shortcomings, of primitive faith and primitive morals, there was, however, this writer affirms, a continuous preparation for the better things which

God had provided for those who should come after. Apart from us, he says, this prophetic past is not made perfect. Many things then revered had come to seem blots on history. God had provided better things to come. Yet ancient Israel builded better than she knew, and the greatness of her history lay, not in its achievements, but in its unconscious preparation for a better future. Her beliefs perished, while her ideals survived. Thus there was a lesser Israel and a greater; and while the lesser passed away, the greater Israel was the foundation of Christianity. Looking back on all that mingled story of aspiration and limitation, this New Testament writer sees its temporary traits drop away, and its essential faith accomplishing its evolution in the better things provided for the later time. "Therefore," he says, "seeing that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before ourselves."

The story of New England Puritanism reproduces in many ways the story of ancient Israel. There was the same sacrifice for religious faith; there was the same intimate

sense of Jehovah's control; there was the same migration to a strange land; the same limitation and exclusiveness of creed. New England was, indeed, practically constructed on the model of the Old Testament. Its laws were Hebraic, and its children were baptized with the names of Barzillai and Ephraim, of Deborah and Mehitabel. But, underlying all these likenesses of detail, there is the profound analogy which my text describes, — the unconscious and unintended preparation by the Puritans for better things.

The Puritan has been called the founder of our civil and religious liberty; and, in a large sense, this is true. Yet the fact is that nothing was farther than this intention from his conscious thought. On the contrary, he meant to found a commonwealth of extreme illiberality. "Democracy," wrote John Cotton in 1636, "I do not conceive that ever God did ordain as a fit government either in Church or Commonwealth." The Puritan exiled Roger Williams as a disturber of the peace. He dealt with the Quakers under the name of "persistent intruders." No man might be a freeman except as a member of his church. So felt the Hebrews to the

despised stranger in their midst, and the Puritans simply regarded themselves as another peculiar people of God in the midst of the unconverted.

And yet, as there was a greater Israel, so there was a greater Puritanism. Within that gnarly shell of stern conformity there was ripening, half unrecognized by Puritanism itself, a more genial fruit. All unawares, the lesser Puritanism gave way, and the greater Puritanism emerged. The letter perished, and the spirit had life. The Puritan thought he could have the exclusive domination of a small colony, and his scheme failed; but, instead of realizing his scheme, he became the spiritual inspiration of a continent. He meant to identify Church and State, and establish an intolerant oligarchy; but again he failed, and within twenty years after Plymouth was settled Church and State began to be separated, and the Puritan became the sponsor of religious liberty. He meant to be loyal to his mother country, but again he failed; and it was his independent spirit which foreordained the republic. He meant to be loyal to his mother Church. His first ministers were ordained priests of the

Church of England; and as Higginson sailed for Salem, he is said to have stood at the stern of the ship, and cried: "We will not say, as the Separatists are wont to say at their leaving of England, 'Farewell, Babylon! farewell, Rome!' but we will say, 'Farewell, dear England! farewell, the Church of God in England!' We do not go to New England as separatists from the Church of England, but we go to practice the positive part of Church reformation." So the Puritan intended; but within that very year he had joined with those Separatists in their ways of worship, and Governor Bradford came from Plymouth to give — as the record says — "approbation and concurrence" at the ordination of Higginson over a church whose only charter was the New Testament, and whose only allies were those same Separatists.

Finally, the leaders of Puritanism meant to make of this College a minister-governed institution, and it is quite terrible to consider how near Cotton Mather came to being our president; but, with a wisdom which must have been almost instinctive, not a word of such limitation crept into the stat-

utes of the College, and from its beginning, and at the hands of a community apparently dominated by a narrow ecclesiasticism, the College was dedicated to comprehensiveness, liberty, and truth. Thus, like the people of Israel, the Puritans builded better than they knew. It was as if some timid band of sailors should plan to cruise along a well-known coast, and as if, in the night, a great current of the ocean should sweep their vessel away through the darkness, until they should wake to find themselves the discoverers of a land nobler than their own familiar shores, but which they had never meant to reach. So the Puritanism of the letter was swept on by the current of the Puritanism of the spirit, with its conscious purpose in the hands of that greater destiny foretold for it in the words of its prophet, John Robinson: "If God shall reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive anything by my ministry; for I am confident that God hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy word."

We live in a time which finds in this grim

and sober past an object, for the most part, of amusement or contempt. There was in Puritanism so much of hardness and sternness, so little of playfulness and joy, such a Sabbath view of life, and such a Spartan view of duty, that we rejoice in the era of a softer temper and a kindlier creed. And yet what serious observer of the present time can doubt that there is a message which Puritanism has still to give? Is it not plain that the weakness of our age lies just where the Puritan was strong? Is it not true that, while the Puritan method has finally and happily disappeared, the special perils of American life to-day lie in the threatened disappearance from among us of the Puritan spirit? Look for a moment at this greater Puritanism, the unconscious and unintended bequest of that rugged past to the America of to-day, and consider whether it is an inheritance to be despised or lightly thrown away.

First of all, the Puritan stood for simplicity. His habit of life was unostentatious, thrifty, democratic, plain. And to-day we have come upon a degree of luxury in American life, of vulgar ostentation and tasteless extravagance and competitive fool-

ishness, which has tainted our social life with sensualism, and have become the laughing-stock of the civilized world. I do not dwell on the immorality of this degradation of prosperity; for its victims are, for the most part, as much beyond moral argument as the victims of any other epidemic disease. I only point out that for the social restlessness and threatening discontent which mark the present time this misuse of prosperity is chiefly responsible.

What stirs the poor among us to revolution is not chiefly the fact of wealth: it is the misuse of wealth. It is the shamelessness of luxury and the ostentation of self-indulgence. To see a man begin life poor and end it rich is not necessarily an exasperating spectacle. It may be regarded by any poor man who has energy and force as an encouraging sign. His, too, are the chances of the world; his, too, the rewards of frugality. But in a time when any serious person must perceive the gravest possibility of social change, and when the masses of the people are realizing to the full their political power, the chief instigator of social revolution, and the element much more dangerous to national

peace than any petty group of anarchists, is the idle, spendthrift, insolently worldly class. No lavishness of almsgiving or ransom for peace can redeem this situation. The hope of our people lies in some degree of restoration of less material standards and ambitions, — the renewal of simplicity as a principle of social life. Life, for us, is certainly more cheerful, tolerant, and beautiful than it was among the Puritans in those harsh winters on that sandy shore; but, at least, they have their message to deliver to this restless time of the simplicity that is in Christ.

There is a second aspect of Puritan character which speaks to the life of to-day. The Puritan was, indeed, severe, unbending, and rigorous; but it was chiefly because one great principle of conduct was with him supreme. It was his loyalty to duty. He knew but one law of life, — the law of righteousness. He had but one authority, — his conscience. And now in these softer days, with a less sterile nature and a less rugged creed, the reaction from Puritan duty-doing is in full sway. What is the curse that seems to lie on much of the literature of the present time, much of its drama, much of its

poetry? It is the substitution of beauty for duty as the source of power. Nothing seems to these artists so prosaic and jarring as the ethical note. Beauty for beauty's sake; truth — even if it be the nakedest truth — for truth's sake, — that is the shibboleth of realism. Rarely enough does literature now take up the martial note of Wordsworth, —

> "Stern daughter of the voice of God,
> O Duty! if that name thou love,
> Who art a light to guide, a rod
> To check the erring and reprove."

Rather is it a time when the lighter instincts of literature, as Wordsworth goes on to say, —

> "Upon the genial sense of youth rely,
> And joy becomes its own security."

I heard an educated man, a descendant of the Puritans, quoted not long ago as saying that he objected to the use of the word "earnestness" as introducing a false note into literature. An objection to earnestness! — why, that was just what the Cavaliers and the Churchmen of England felt when they encountered the Puritan spirit, and what drove the Pilgrims from the fleshpots of

their Egypt to the wilderness of New England.

And what shall we say of this loyalty to conscience in our political world, and of that political righteousness which the Puritans, like the Hebrews, believed the only thing which exalted a nation? Great and prosperous and triumphant as modern Democracy may be, has it no lesson to learn from the serious-minded, self-examining, scrupulously conscientious Puritan? The Puritan was not afraid to fight. He lived with his sword girt on his side and his flint-lock in his hand. But he was afraid to do wrong. He would not dare to fight for any cause that was unjust or superfluous. He was not a free-booter, looking for a chance for glory: he was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, taking orders for a holy war. His commonwealth rested, not on bluster, but on righteousness; and his legislators were chosen under this counsel of John Robinson: "Whereas you are to become a body political, let your wisdom and godliness appear by choosing such persons as do entirely love and will diligently promote the common good. And this duty you may the more willingly and conscionably

perform because you are to have those only for governors which yourself shall make choice of for that work."

Is not that a political creed worthy of a place in a modern platform? And is it not on precisely this serious-minded courage that the hope of the nation depends? A country like this is not likely to be taken captive by external foes, but we may as well understand that its permanence is not yet beyond the possibility of disaster. One condition of prosperity no nation is strong enough to defy, — the necessity for soberness, consistency, and self-control. Republics quite as strong as this, in comparison with the powers of their own age, have had their day and have ceased to be. The real perils among us are internal, — a soft theory of life, a limp literature, reckless politics, and conscienceless competition. These are foes which no navy is large enough to repel, and no coast defence strong enough to exclude. The stability of the Republic rests where the Pilgrims planted it, on the rock of a national conscience; and the only secure coast defence is along the line of the stern and rock-bound coast of righteousness.

Finally, the Puritan was sustained in his conquest of a wilderness by an ever-present and intimate sense of the leadership of God. His religion, like that of Israel, was often exclusive, partial, and narrow; but, like that of Israel, it was intense, continuous, and supreme. The principal reason of his great adventure was, as he said, "the inward zeal he had of laying some good foundation for the propagating of the kingdom of Christ in these remote parts of the world." But, in these more favored days, what has become of that living, simple sense of God which guided daily life among our forefathers, as if by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night? Sometimes one comes out of a frosty night into a genial, firelit room, and his energy slackens as he settles himself into that warmth and peace. Is it not somewhat so that we have come out of the spiritual energy of that frosty past into the genial conditions of the present time? The Puritan's faith, like his climate, was harsh; but it was bracing. The Puritan's God, like his soul, was hard; but, at least, it was a God who made man do his duty when that duty

also was hard. The Puritan religion was described some years ago under the title of the "Hard Church;" and it is a great blessing to have emerged from that stern literalism of the lesser Puritanism. But is it not time to face the perils of the "Soft Church," — the unvertebrated creed, the molluscous liberalism, which consents to any faith because all faith seems to it unreal? The Soft Church is not promoting free thought, but free thoughtlessness; it stands not for liberty, but for license. It is often very broad, but it is always very thin. Out of the historic past the greater Puritanism recalls us to the stability of character wrought out of responsibility to God. The fear of the Lord is still the beginning of wisdom; and whatever better things may be prepared for us in these later days will slip from our hands, and the nation whose prosperity has been unexampled in the history of the world will forfeit its own mission, unless a new degree of soberness and accountability administers its politics and controls its heart.

Thus from among the abundant blessings of to-day we look back to that simple, duty-

doing, God-fearing past. There was but one rock in Plymouth Bay, and the Pilgrims drew their boat beside it as they possessed the land. We enter more richly into that great possession; but on the rugged boulder of simplicity and duty and faith the feet of those who would hold this heritage must first be set. The Puritan spirit was like one of those bulbs which this country imports, as it did Puritanism, from Holland, in its dull, rough husk, with no perceptible grace or fragrance. Set it, however, in the sun of the later centuries, and that rough stalk blossoms into a flower which would have seemed to the Puritan almost too fair. So the blessings of the present have their root in that sterner past. We do not outgrow the past: we grow out of it. First come the severe virtues of the forefathers; and then, and only then, the softer graces of the modern age. First the lesser Puritanism of form and letter, then the greater Puritanism of spirit and truth. First the primitive College of plain living and high thinking, and then, resting on that precious tradition of simplicity and integrity, the richer learning

of the later time. First the character of those who, not having attained the promise, still died in faith, and then the better things which are prepared for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

XIV

RELIGION IN THIS PRESENT WORLD

For the grace of God hath appeared, . . . instructing us, that . . . we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world. — *Titus* ii. 11, 12.

THESE three words — "soberly," "righteously," "godly" — sum up the New Testament statement of a well-rounded character. Soberly as regards one's self, righteously as regards one's neighbors, godly as regards one's religion, — that is the complete description of the Christian life. But the Apostle goes on to say that this kind of life is to be lived "in this present world," under the conditions of the world as it now is. To him, an essential part of the Christian life is its relation to its own time. It must be a life in its own world as well as a life in eternity. Would the Apostle have said this if he had lived now? Is this a good time for a sober, righteous, and godly life? Can one expect to be a man of this present age, moved by its tendencies, marked by its traits, and yet with the sobriety and righteous-

ness and godliness of the Christian character?

Here we meet one of the most common and most enfeebling heresies of our time, — the impression that this is not a good time for a sober, righteous, and godly life, the presupposition that the spirit of the age is against the Christian, the doctrine of an unpropitious environment. "Business standards," it is said, "are relaxing; home habits are loose; self-seeking is the common rule; plain living and high thinking are not the custom of the time." Under these unpropitious conditions, therefore, two ways of life suggest themselves. One way is to yield to the pressure of the age. Accepting its inconsistency with the Christian life, one may adapt himself to standards of which his conscience never can approve. That is the common worldliness of the present age, surrendering character to social pressure. It is moral cowardice and religious treason.

The other thing to do is to run away from the age. That is what thousands of the choicest souls have done throughout Christian history. They have thought it impossible to live a sober, righteous, and godly life

under the prevailing conditions of their own time; and so they have fled from its influence, hiding themselves in monasteries and peopling the desert with caves. No one can read the story of these ascetics and hermits without a glow of admiration. It is a great thing that the enticements of each age which have overpowered so many souls have been powerless over a few. But none the less this whole story is not the story of a battle, but of a flight. These people were simply afraid of their own time; and they ran away and tried to save themselves, while the great body of men had to fight the battle without them. It was a flight based not on faith, but on faithlessness; on the doctrine that God had deserted His world, and that to find Him they must desert it also. And it was a fruitless flight. Fleeing from the world, they fled from all the chance they had to make it better.

I stood once on a little point of the upper Nile, where the first Christian hermit gathered his disciples. Among those drifting sand-hills, in rude caves and dens, once lived a thousand holy men and women, drawn from the wealth, beauty, and learning of the world;

and now, as one stands there, what is there left of all their Christian impulses and dreams? No monument of charity is there, no contribution to learning, no noble church or hospital or school. No effort to redeem the time in which they lived remains for their memorial. The traveller stands there in a vast solitude, and sees across the ocean of sand nothing but the rippled surface of their unnumbered graves.

If, then, the sober, righteous, and godly man is not to yield himself to the present age, and is not to flee from it, what is he to do? Why, he is to use it, — to take it just as it is, as the God-given material out of which the Christian character fit for the present time is to be wrought. Here is a potter working in his clay. It is a coarse material, and his hands grow soiled in moulding it; but it is not for him to reject it because it is not clean, or to dabble in it, like a child, just for the sake of getting dirty. It is for him to take it just as it is, and to work out the shapes of beauty which are possible under the laws and limits of the clay. Precisely such material is this modern world. It is not very clean; its ways of business, its

methods of industry, its habits of society, are soiling to the touch; but it is not one's duty to wash his hands of it, or to surrender to its evil, but to take these very conditions of the present age as the material out of which one is to mould a new type of moral beauty. To run away from the tendencies of modern life, — that is easy enough; to yield to its evil, — that is still easier; but to be in the world, yet not of it, moulding its material, yet not defiled by it, — that is the real problem of the modern Christian.

And here enters the new type of Christian character. The saints of the past have been, for the most part, people who have fled from the world; but the Christian saint of to-day is the person who can use the world. Here is a woman in the midst of the social life of to-day. The world about her is frivolous, self-indulgent, luxurious, demoralizing, and she wants to be serious and devout. What is she to do? Is she to flee from such a world as from a sinking ship and save herself while it goes under? On the contrary, in the very quality of her surroundings lies her religious opportunity. Let her stand in her lot and redeem it. Let her live the life of simplicity

amid the possibilities of self-indulgence; of generous service where there might have been selfish folly. That is her battle, and it is quite as hard as to be a saint and as holy as to be a nun.

Here is a young man in the midst of college life, with its intellectualism and its irresponsibility. How is he to serve Christ here? Is it by living under the doctrine of the hostile environment, and withdrawing himself as far as he may from the spirit of this place? On the contrary, his Christian opportunity lies in the conditions which are actually here, and which may be moulded by a young man's strength into circumstances of beauty and good.

Oh, when one sees how much can be done among us by nothing more than just the unpretentious living among us of quiet, manly men; how excellence as much as vice is contagious; how effective are those who without the least posing or self-consciousness, as Laurence Oliphant once said, simply "lead the life," then one's prayer for a youth in college to-day becomes much braver than any timid desire for individual safety. "O God," we pray, "lead our young men, not

out of their circumstances, but deeper into them; not round their difficulties, but straighter through them; not to the getting of safety for themselves, but to the giving of safety to others." "He that loses his life for my sake and the gospel's," said Jesus, "he alone shall find it." That is the call to the sober, righteous, and godly life which can be lived in the midst of this present age.

What is it for which we meet in this chapel, except to bring these two together, — on the one hand the godly life, and on the other the present age? On the one hand is this stream of young, fresh life, sweeping through our midst with its capacity for service; and on the other hand is the world of this present age, waiting, like many a dry, unpromising field in our western country, which needs only to be irrigated in order to be bewilderingly fruitful. There never was a time when so many interests were calling for help, or when intelligent service could be so effective. Such an age cannot be an enemy of the soul. It is more like a thirsty soil which is waiting for the water of life. The present age is the best chance God has ever given for the Christian life, and this

land is the best land in which that chance can be met.

What the present age needs is the sober, righteous, and godly life; and what that kind of life needs is just such an opportunity as the present age provides. The man who hides himself behind the spirit of the age, and makes it the apology for his own folly or sin, is simply mistaken in his impressions of the time. He is like many a man in that western country, who has thought himself standing in a hopeless desert when he really stood in what might be a garden of the world. He simply abandons it to barrenness instead of turning upon it the stream of service which is at his command and for which the desert longs. The man who throws a sober, righteous, and godly life into the activities and agitations of the present age is but contributing the fertilizing power to a receptive and responsive world; and the hills and valleys about him will shout for joy at their redemption by that pure and abundant stream.

XV

MAKING ROOM FOR CHRIST

(Thursday before Christmas.)

Because there was no room for them in the inn. — *Luke* ii. 7.

THE Eastern inn is still, as it was centuries ago, simply a great inclosure where people and cattle and merchandise are gathered for the night, camping out, as we should say, in the more sheltered parts of the great walled-in yard. The place was full on that first Christmas eve, just as the traveller in Palestine sometimes sees such a place full in our own day, — full of caravans and camels and camp-fires, of men trading, and women cooking, and children playing, and donkeys and dogs resting against the cool walls; and when this humble family — so the story says — arrived, toward evening, at the khan, they found themselves crowded out of the best places and had to camp among the cattle in their stalls.

Tradition has put this stable in an underground cave, such as is sometimes still used for shelter in the hot East; and there in the darkness the traveller is shown by lantern-light a great gold star, set in the stone pavement, marking the spot where the child Jesus was born. One can hardly picture a greater contrast than between the Bethlehem to which Joseph and Mary came and the Bethlehem of to-day. Then there was a busy, trafficking crowd thronging the great inn, and with no welcome for this obscure arrival. Now the khan is lost to all recognition, and where the stable used to be stands a gorgeous church, and under the church is the cave glittering with jewels, and the reverence of the world is fixed on that family who then found no room in the inn.

And yet, with all this growth of reverence, and all this celebrating of the coming of Christ, it seems as if much the same story which is told of that first Christmas eve might be told in modern language of the absorbing life of the modern world. Probably there never was a time or place in the history of the world when life was so intense and complex, as it is in the whirl of

American civilization to-day. Modern life is like that inn at Bethlehem, with the noise of business in every corner, with publicity thrown on every act, with hardly any withdrawal into domestic privacy, and with the home of many a man hardly more than a shelter where he spends the night and from which he sets forth in the morning with his caravan of daily interests, marching toward new duties and new gains. In the midst of this trafficking, engrossing, gossiping publicity, what is the fundamental risk? It is now, as it was then, the risk of crowding out the Christ; of keeping no place in this busy world for the ideal aims and interior peace and divine visitations, which come to us now, as then, modestly and unobtrusively, and invite our welcome.

"There was no room for them in the inn." Here, for instance, is this busy scene of college life, with its absorbing interests, its ambitions and competitions, its daily demands. It seems a beautiful thing to be won thus to the scholar's life, and to be indifferent to all other ambitions and desires; and yet it sometimes happens that the scholar's life leaves no room for the very

interests which make any life worth living. Leisure finds itself crowded out, peace of mind is lost, friendships languish, professional life which was once liberty becomes more like imprisonment, until, as Mr. Darwin touchingly records how his mind by degrees grew atrophied toward the music and poetry he once loved, a learned man sometimes loses the capacity to care for the things which give meaning and color to life. He has missed the end of life in his pursuit of the means of life. Instead of seeking the truth that makes men free, he has been tempted by the truth that shuts men in, and when the great ideal interests come knocking at his door and asking a generous welcome, there is no room for them within his absorbed and stunted mind.

And when we pass from the scholar's experience to the more general way of life which concerns us all, certainly we meet here the most conspicuous evil of American life. It is its nervous hurry, the overwhelming demands of its business, yes, even the business-like character of its amusements, and the preposterous amount of time they consume. What is the fundamental risk of

this tremendous rush of life in which many American people now spend their days? It is, of course, the risk that the little things shall crowd out the great things, that the thronging interests of daily life may leave no room for our ideals, that we become so absorbed in doing things that we lose the faculty to pause and reflect and feel.

No room in the inn! Is there not something of this crowding out, even at this very time of Christian remembrance? Here is this rush and worry of the season, this burden of commercial interchange, this exaggerated fashion into which our celebrations run. What a strange thing it would be if people were so busy commemorating Christ that they had no time to receive him, if the Holy Family should come into the whirl of this Christmas season, as it came that night into the inn of Bethlehem, and should find no room for themselves in the busy world of modern life.

An Englishman has recently published a book called, "If Christ should come to Chicago?" and a distinguished American has followed this book with an article called, "If Jesus should come to Boston?" Suppose

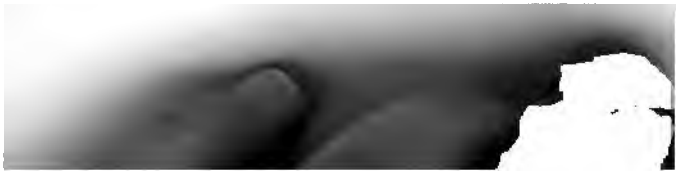
we ask ourselves this same question, "If Jesus Christ should come to Cambridge?" Suppose that in these days which commemorate his first coming his spirit should desire to come again into our academic circle, into our public interests, into our personal lives; suppose that the great word should be spoken to us again, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door I will come in," what should we have to say to him?

I see the Master coming thus in these very days into the varied life of this community. I see him coming to the College, with its engrossing work and play, coming to the young men with new suggestions of consecration, and to the old men with the call to larger service, and asking of them all: "Is there room for me in this busy place?" I see him coming to us in our public interests, in the moral issues of our city's life, in the causes that are dear to his mind, and asking, "Is there room for me in this prosperous town? Can this be in its standards and its methods a Christian city? Have its people time to care for its higher life?" I see him coming to us in our friendships

and affections, half-broken by the strain of life, and in the overcoming of the grudges and grievances which have been nourished throughout the year; and he asks: "Is there room for me in these hearts, with their conflicting passions? Are they able to welcome my spirit of peace and good-will?" He comes to us in the poor and needy, as he came in the beggar's garb to Sir Launfal and says:—

"He who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a God goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

He comes to us, last of all, in our personal restlessness and haste, our worry and care, our frivolity and excitement, and says to us, as he said to his disciples: "Where is my guest-chamber? Is there room for me in your busy, thoughtless life to-night?" and the soul that is touched by the sense of the Christmas season, flings open its gate and says: "Enter, O spirit of the Christ. Within my busy life there is still room. Enter, and keep the feast with me."



XVI

THE NEW NAME

To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it. — *Rev.* ii. 17.

THIS symbolism is drawn from the Jewish ritual. The high priest in the Old Testament had a special and intimate relation with God. It was he alone that could enter into the Holy of Holies and eat of the manna which was hidden there as a sacrifice; and on his breast he wore a special sign with a sacred and mysterious inscription unknown to the common world. The splendid imagination of this author transfers all this immediate and solemn intimacy to the whole body of Christian believers. Ye are all, he means to say, priests unto God. The sacred relationship which, under the old Law, was for one holy person, is now to be the blessed privilege of all faithful souls. He that overcometh shall have direct access to the presence

of God, without the intermediation of any priest. He can go straight to the altar of the hidden manna; he can wear on his own breast the special name which is known to him and to God alone. The Christian religion, that is to say, singles out the individual from the mass and gives to each one a place and significance and sanctity which are for no one else but him.

This is a time when we need to recall again and again the individualizing, personal, selective process for which religion stands. There probably never was a time in history when people were so much involved in wholesale, aggregate, mass-movements, and when the individual was tempted to think of himself as of so little account. When we want anything accomplished in our day, we organize an association, and hold a meeting, and appoint sub-committees, as if to justify Matthew Arnold in saying that our most sacred book was the Book of Numbers. When we look at the world of industry, what does it seem but a huge machine in which the individual worker is simply one little cog in one little wheel, whose impersonal action interlocks with all the rest? I stood once at the

death-bed of such a man, who had spent all his days as a clerk in the midst of a vast establishment; and as we talked about the death that seemed approaching him he looked up in my face and said: "Sir, I have been practically dead and buried for twenty years."

Or, once more, we look at our social life, and does it not seem like a great mass of conventionalism and conformity, to which the individual has to conform, but which he cannot hope to transform? The very slang of the time seems to make of the individual merely an atom in the movement of the mass. One person says that he "keeps up with the procession;" as if the problem of his life were like that of a little boy who tries to keep step with the band. Another person says that he is "in the swim;" as if he were a sort of conscious chip swept along by a resistless current. And in the midst of this impersonal, aggregated conventionalism many a young life cries out: "Oh, to be, somehow, myself; to be something more than a cog in the machine and a chip in the stream! Oh, to have some personal and rational place in the order of things, which shall make it worth while to live!"

Now, that is precisely the gift of religion to many a half-submerged and dehumanized life. It sifts the person out of the mass. It gives him a name and a place of his own — a very small place, no doubt, and a very humble name, but still his own. He is not a cog; he is not a chip; he is a child of God; and just as each child in a family has his own name and his own individualized love, so in the family of God there is a name and a right of approach for each humblest child.

That is the very first thing which religion does for a man. You open the Old Testament, and find that when God calls people He calls them not in a crowd, but each one by his own name. "Samuel, Samuel," He calls, and the boy says: "Here am I." You turn to the New Testament, and find that when the shepherd puts forth his sheep he calls each by name and leadeth them out. The shepherd goes after the one sheep; the woman seeks for the one piece of money. Each soul is identified and precious. You come to the last pages of the Bible and the promise is that he who overcometh shall be as the high priest, with the right to the hid-

den manna, and with a new name written on his breast.

That is the dignity and significance of the person in the sight of God. Sometimes one hears it said that the young people of to-day think too much of themselves. Quite the contrary is the truth. The fundamental peril of their life is that they shall not think enough of themselves, shall not believe enough in their own capacity, significance, and place, shall permit themselves to be submerged in the crowd, and imagine it impossible to be personally called of God to a service which no one else can do. Out of the mass of people, like this in which we gather here, there is detached in religion the single soul; and it is as if it slipped away from this whole world of companionship and entered solemnly and alone into the sacred presence, and found a name for itself among the purposes of God.

But this is not quite all. For this name with which one comes into God's presence is not, according to this passage, one's old and familiar name. It is not what you pass for here; or what you have done; or what you are supposed to do; or what the world

thinks of you; or even what you think of yourself, that is written on your breast. It is, says the passage, a new name; a name that no one knows save you — the name not of your achievements, but of your ideals; not of what you have done, but of what you have sincerely desired to do. Behind all the conformity and unreality in which you seem to be involved stands the "God of things as they are," knowing what you want to be, and justifying your dreams.

And does not this bring to many a life new courage? If you were to be judged by what you have accomplished, that would be sad enough. But that is not the promise. It is that you shall bear the name, not of what you have done, but of what you desired to do. In the midst of your ineffective, misdirected, and fickle life there has leaped up sometimes the sincere desire for effective service, like a flame that flickers and then goes out; and now God takes that meagre, incomplete, visionary ideal and accepts it as the true self, and lights the flame afresh, and gives it a new name, which no man knows save he for whom it is written; and the life that felt itself defeated and humbled

and solitary enters into the power and peace of this companionship of God.

Such are the two things which religion does for you. It takes you out of the mass, and it takes you at your best. First it detaches you from the crowd and gives you the hidden manna of personal significance, and then it gives you the new name of your ideals and dreams. First it gives you your identity, and then it restores your idealism. First you find yourself, then you believe in yourself. First, in the midst of this mass of college life the Christian religion gives you the capacity to lead a life of your own, and then, as you try to live this life, the best you can do is translated into the better you seem withheld from doing.

That is what one would like to say if he could, in the name of Christ, to a throng of light-hearted people pausing for a moment in the rush of life and detaching themselves from the busy world. Is it possible, any one of us might ask, for me to live that life of which I sometimes dream? No, probably not. It would be very rarely that one could get beyond the region of a partial, ineffective, unsatisfying life. But this may

happen, — that as you live much short of what you dream, God will take you at your best, and translate the real into the ideal, and in the secrecy of His companionship will confide to you the new name of your desire and dream. And that means peace, courage, persistence, hope. You can live in the imperfect in that light of the Eternal. Your life is judged, not by what you accomplish, but by what you want to do. You find your peace, not in success, not in applause, but in this promise, — that the poor little reality of your achievement shall be forgotten, and the new name — the name of that which you desired to be — shall be written upon your breast.

"And this one thought of hope and trust
Comes with its healing balm,
As here I lay my brow in dust
And breathe my lowly psalm, —
That not for heights of victory won,
But those I tried to gain,
Will come my gracious Lord's 'Well done!'
And sweet, effacing rain."

XVII

THE SACRAMENT OF SERVICE

(Thursday before Easter.)

Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet. — *John* xiii. 3–5.

N this Thursday before Easter Sunday the Christian world commemorates the last day of the life of Jesus Christ, — a day whose afternoon and evening are crowded with incidents which make it the most solemn time in the history of the world. First, there is the supper with his disciples, and its symbolism of remembrance, which has ever since remained the centre of Christian worship. Then there is the garden, with its final struggle of the human will and its perfect committal of spirit: "Not my will, but Thine be done." Then there is the mob, spitting and buffeting; and so the night passes and the day of the cross dawns.

In the midst of these hurrying events comes this incident of washing the disciples' feet. The Christian church, in its absorbing interest in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, has almost lost sight of this other symbolic rite, of equal significance and authority. Here was Jesus in the complete consciousness of his approaching destiny. He knows that he is come from God and goes to God. He recognizes that the Father has given all things into his hands. The full dignity and power and authority of his mission are perfectly clear to his mind; and now he has one last chance to reassert his greatness and to fix in the minds of his followers the spirit of his life. At such a moment what does Jesus do? He does not exhort, or appeal, or dictate, or, indeed, say any further word. He uses the unmistakable language of symbolism, which each age can translate into its own dialect. He rises from the table, and, passing from friend to friend as they lie recumbent at their Oriental meal, he bends over them, as the humblest servant of the house might have bent, and washes the disciples' feet.

What does he want to teach his friends by

this act of self-abasement? He wants to teach them what, according to his doctrine, it is to be truly great; what one does when the Father has given all things into his hands; what is the secret of Christian leadership. To such questions his answer is an act of service. It is as if he said: "Oh, my friends, with all your ambitions and hopes of some earthly kingdom and some conspicuous place in it, let me make you sure of this, that the only lordship of the world I have to offer to you is to come through service, the only glory is that of sacrifice, the only leadership that of love. Your work in the world is not to do great things, but to do small things greatly; to take your gifts, capacity, devotion, such as they are, and set them to the doing of the humblest deeds. This is my last sacrament offered to you, — the sacrament of service."

The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of power derived from Jesus; the washing of the feet is the sacrament of service inspired by Jesus. You cannot separate the two sacraments. It is vain to partake of the body and the blood of Christ unless they stir in one the works of Christ. No illusion

is greater than to think one's self getting religion if it does not make one gird one's self to serve. There is no sanctification through Christ which does not make one say with him: "For their sakes I sanctify myself." The lordship of the world is for him who stoops to serve. Distinction is not from what one gets, but from what one gives. Jesus bows himself to the work of a servant, and it is as he does this work that he is able to say: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

The sacrament of service! Was there ever anything more unlike the common view of life — and indeed the common Christian view of life — than this symbolism of Jesus? A man, for example, in our day is looking at life and considering how his gifts, such as they are, may be wisely used; and the first rule of life which might commend itself to him seems to be that of a certain economy of power. "Make the most of yourself; reserve yourself; put what power you have to its largest uses; do not waste your force on insignificant occasions;" — that would seem to be a rational, thrifty, sagacious view of life. But precisely opposed to this is the meaning

of the symbolism of Jesus. It teaches, not the using of small gifts for great occasions, but the using of great gifts for small occasions. It finds the glory of life in stooping to the humblest tasks. The holy communion of the Lord's Supper is not a more sacred act than the washing of the disciples' feet. The humble service testifies to the spiritual power, just as the little stream of water that flows through its pipe into your house testifies, by the very force and abundance with which it flows, to the great reservoir of power high up among the hills.

I do not know anything which more completely distinguishes the Christlike life from the life of average morality than this stooping to the sacrament of service. Forty years ago, for instance, there lived in Boston a man of great power and distinction, adventurous, gallant, noble, — a man, as his biographer wrote, who "combined the qualities of Sir Galahad and the Good Samaritan;" and one day there is offered to this great man the task by which he has become best known. It comes to him in the form of one poor, dull woman, deaf and dumb and blind, imprisoned in the solitary cell of her

infirmity. For months the man of genius labors at the emancipation of this soul, until at last his skill pierces the wall of her cell and she is let out into the world of human companionship and resources and joy. Was it not the very loneliness and obscurity of this untiring devotion and skill, which would have made Jesus say to this man: "Well done, faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in the least; I will make thee ruler over much."

Or, again, a few years ago there lived in England a beautiful, refined, well-born woman; and one day she rises from her table of plenty and gives herself to serve the stricken patients of the smallpox wards, and we read that a poor dying man looks up into her face and says, "Kiss me, Sister Dora;" and, as she bends over him and gives him her benediction, dies content. What is the spirit of such a life but that of which Jesus was thinking when he rose from supper and girded himself and washed the disciples' feet?

Or, again, a fair young American girl is walking one day down the crowded street of a great city, and she meets a poor drunken woman, pointed at by the crowd, and the girl

just puts her arm round that poor slatternly wretch, walks down the crowded thoroughfare, arm locked in arm, puts the woman to bed, warms the soup, and daily returns until the devil of drink is driven out by the new affection, and the body and soul of one poor child of God are saved. Is not that what Jesus meant to teach when he said: "I am among you as one that serveth." "He that is greatest, let him be your servant." "For even the Son of man comes not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

The sacrament of service, however, does not always present itself in ways so dramatic, or picturesque, or exciting as these. It is offered to many a young man and many a young woman in homelier form. Here is such a life, full of its ambitions, ideals, visions, and it is called one day to sacrifice them all for the obligations and responsibilities of home. It has to surrender the great hope for the small duties; and the routine and flatness of duty seem so deadly that the heart cries out, as one young girl once cried: "O God, make me anything, so I be not commonplace." But what is this but Jesus Christ, again, testifying to his right to leader-

ship by stooping to serve. It is often much easier to do the conspicuous and dramatic duty — even if it be a hard duty — than it is to efface one's self in homely service; just as in modern Italy noble ladies make it a pious duty to wash the feet of picturesque old women in the church instead of girding themselves to the obscurer task of cleansing the life and the slums of the poor. But the sacrament cannot be taken vicariously; the self-denial cannot be deputed; the home-duty, the obscure demand, is imperative and personal; and only as he bends to that abnegation of ambition is any son of man glorified and God glorified in him.

The sacrament of service! It is offered sometimes to one who does not think himself fit for that other sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It does not call for any profession of faith or certainty of conviction. It does not wait until one arrives at church; it does not separate one from other worshippers. It is offered to one just as he is and just where he happens to be, — in the work or play or companionship of life. Here is the great struggling, weary, un-Christlike world at our doors, and here are the dreams and hopes of

Christian discipleship which hover before us as we pray; and to give the one to the other, the high ideal to the lowly deed, the great thought to the slight kindness, and to do all this without ostentation or conceit, — that is as though once more Jesus rose from table and bent in his sacrament of service; and as he bent looked up into the face of his disciple and said: "I have given you an example that you should do even as I have done to you."

XVIII

PERSPECTIVE

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 *Timothy* ii. 15.

PAUL is writing here to young Timothy about his Christian duty, just as an old man might write to a young man to-day. He tells him not to be afraid of hardness; not to forget his Master, Christ; not to quarrel about words; and then he goes on to say that one test of his being a good Christian is to think of himself as a workman, — an artisan or artist, — who fits together the parts of his work just where they belong; paints them in their right proportion; sees them in their true perspective. That, he says, is the kind of workman who has no cause to blush, — an "*operarius non erubescendus*," — for he has rightly divided, or worked out in true proportions, the word of truth.

Here, for instance, is a boy who thinks he would like to be an architect, and he sits down and draws the plan of a house; but

when his father examines the plan he notices that, in order to get an ample hall and pleasant rooms, the boy has left no room for the stairs, and the people will have to go to bed by a ladder. That is a workman who has cause to blush. Or here, again, is a Chinaman painting a plate, and he makes his house in the foreground no larger than the man on the hill behind it, while the man is larger than the bridge which he apparently intends to cross. That is what we call Chinese perspective, and it seems to us a wrong dividing of the word of truth. Now the Apostle asks young Timothy not to draw his plan of life without the true proportion of small things to great, without a true perspective through its details to its real issues. The difficulty with many men, he seems to say, is not that they cannot distinguish between what is true and what is false; but that they do not see the relative dimensions of truth; and the workman who need not blush is he who sees things just as they are, not over-magnified or over-depreciated, but with the near things large and the remote things small, as a landscape stretches away before the eye.

How true that is, for example, in the region of thought of which the Apostle was thinking, — the world of theology! Here is this body of Christian thought which has been developed through the centuries. It is a great word of truth transmitted to our time. But why is it that Christians are so far from agreement in their theology? Is it because some persons have reached principles which are absolutely false and some have inherited beliefs which are absolutely true; or is it chiefly because the proportions of truth have become distorted; the great problems confused with the small ones; the attention absorbed in that which is insoluble and diverted from that which is sure? Most of our theological controversies come of a wrong division of the word of truth. For truth is not seen all at once; but rather as a man sees the succession of objects which are before him as he walks down the street. Some objects are close to him, and he recognizes them as friends; some can be only dimly distinguished, and he cannot tell whether he knows their names or not; and far away there are objects in the distance which may be people and which may be

posts. It is not truthful, therefore, to pretend that all such objects are equally verifiable and near. He who does not divide the truth makes it a falsehood; and his guesses at the things which are uncertain bewilder him about the things which are perfectly sure. In the same way, when we look at the controversies of Christendom, we find them concerned for the most part, not with near and verifiable realities, but with remote distinctions of metaphysics or cosmology, about which certainty is simply not to be attained. That is what ought to make many a Christian theologian blush, — not that he has mistaken falsehood for truth, but that in his excessive devotion to the remoter problems of thought he has lost the sense of proportion and has not rightly divided the word of truth.

The same thing is true in the world of duty. Most of the mistakes of decent people come, not from defiance of their consciences, but from consciences without a sense of proportion. The great duty made small, and the little duty made great, — that is the story of many a fretful, worried, overburdened, fussy life. How difficult and puz-

zling life often grows to a conscience that has lost its sense of proportion. It tries to do right, and still neglects its duty. It borrows much trouble from the future, and wastes the opportunity that is in its hands. It dreams of coming battles, and wakes to find them past.

Indeed, here is the story of many a tragedy in human experience. Trivial incidents get so engrossing that life becomes unprepared for the great issues. A man gets all absorbed in his business and intends some day to enjoy his home; a woman gets ensnared in the burdensome details of life and loses her peace of mind; and one day some great overwhelming experience of trial or sorrow suddenly attacks such a life, and the life simply surrenders to the unforeseen assault, stricken and unprepared, because the strength which ought to have been nurtured for the crisis has been exhausted in the insignificant skirmishes of daily affairs.

I am thinking, however, most of the academic life and its special problems and needs. Here is a place where truth is set before us in infinitely varied forms, with its detail and routine, with its inspiration and persuasion.

And how is one to receive this "word of truth"? Of course there are some among us who do not receive it at all. The great word "Veritas" is spoken to them in vain. They do not feel the deeper current of university life. They drift along on its surface like chips on a stream, swept on from the school-life where that stream takes its rise to the ocean of the world at that stream's mouth. But to any serious-minded man among us, young or old, the chief problem in dealing with truth as it is presented to us here is the problem of proportion. How to see our life in perspective; how to see the end of education through the means of it, the whole of it in the parts; how to find the University, not a place in which one is lost, a wilderness of details, but a vista through the details to the great ends of life; how, as the margin of the Revised Version translates this verse, "to hold a straight course in the word of truth," — that is a daily and perplexing problem, and one where many a well-intentioned workman has cause to blush.

Now that is precisely the point where religion makes its first approach to academic life. Religion does not answer all problems,

or free one from all tasks; but it does set life in perspective, it does see life as a whole and open the way through the multiplicity of details, which is so confusing, toward the permanent and commanding issues of life. That is the place of worship in a world of work. Elsewhere we are overburdened with details and complexity. Here, for a moment, we come away from this confusion and let the purpose of it all lie in true proportions before our minds. It is like a man who is trudging along in the valley and wonders if he has lost his way, and then comes out for a moment upon the hilltop and has the direction of his life verified once more. Just to get out of the underbrush of bewildering routine, just to escape from the control of cares and follies and sins, and to see life with a broader horizon, — that is the first blessing which one gets from his religion in this absorbed and feverish age.

It is as if one had been a child playing with a kaleidoscope and watching the constantly shifting mass of accidental fragments, and then should put his eye to a telescope and looking past the fragmentary happenings of life should see the greatness and order of

the wonderful world in which his little life was set. Just a broadening of horizon, a freedom from the small things which fret and wear, and a joy in the great things which quiet and refresh, — is not that what we need? Then, perhaps, we may go back to the world again, not as those who want to shirk it, not as those who have retreated into some unreal world for comfort, and have to blush when confronted with life as it really is, but as those to whom the proportions of things have been in some degree disclosed, and who can rightly divide this bewildering world of duty and desire which makes up the infinitely varied revelation of the truth of God.

XIX

VISION

Where there is no vision, the people perish. — *Prov.* xxix. 18.

IT is no wonder that this maxim became a proverb among the Hebrew people, for their whole history illustrates it. They were a people whose national life was created and maintained by their capacity for vision. Their actual life was repeatedly relapsing into idolatry and sin; but through the centuries there was constantly held before them the vision of an ideal state, a higher life, a holier future. That was the work of the prophets in Hebrew history. They were forever recalling the people from their real to their ideal life. There might be bad kings, bad teachers, bad conduct; but there was kept before the people the promise of that which they should be, the Messianic hope, the call of God to them to be a chosen people. That is what gives its character to Hebrew history and what sustained the nation through centuries of reaction and super-

stition and sin. Had they once lost that vision of their higher calling, that sense of being a people chosen of God to fulfil some high end, the history of religion would never have found its greatest epoch in their midst. From age to age, they held this thought of their higher destiny close to their daily life, and made these words a proverb on their lips, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

It has been in some degree the same with all national life, and it remains the same to-day. That which gives to any country its stability and strength is not the immediate prosperity which it has gained, but the national ideals which pervade its life. Has it any vision of a better future? Does the race of prophets speak to its faith and its conscience? Or is it sunk in self-sufficiency, material prosperity, and self-indulgence, until there is no vision any more? That is the test of a nation's future. Rome, with its youthful vision of a robust and conquering manhood, had the world at her feet; Rome, in her maturity of self-centred power and indulgence, was, even in her greatest prosperity, doomed to decline. Greece, per-

suaded by the vision of ideal beauty, became the teacher of the world; Greece, without a vision, the idolater of sensual beauty, became the warning of the world. America, with her vision of a completed democracy, an equality of opportunity, an aristocracy of character, her politics based on moral issues, seems to hold the future of civilization in her hands; America, the victim of her own prosperity, blinded by the very brightness of her real possessions so that she cannot see her ideal interests, — America, sunk in mammonism and dilettanteism and self-indulgence, would be abandoning her leadership and surrendering to social revolution or decay. She would be like a city which cannot be taken from without, but is captured by conspirators from within. It is her ideals that keep her from a sensualism as base as that of Greece and a decline more rapid than that of Rome. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

What is true of a nation is still more true of an individual. Each of us, I suppose, is apt to think that his life is made up of that which he has, or else of that which he is. But it is not. That which, in reality, most defines your life is not its possessions or its

acquisitions, but its desires, its expectations, its imaginations, its visions. Does a man's life have no such characteristic? Is it absorbed in that which it is getting, measuring itself by its gains of money or information or success? Then it is a life which is being shut in, more and more, as high walls close in on both sides of a straight and dusty road, shutting out all view, all color, all but one line of horizon. The more one advances along that track, the more meagre and wearying and narrow his life will seem. But, on the contrary, has your life any range of imagination, affection, or faith? Does the sense of your vocation stand distinct from its present results, as the sense of being a chosen people was kept distinct through Hebrew history? Then, through the power of that vision, though your way may be narrow, your view is made broad. You look over the walls of life. You see fair landscapes and far horizons. You are not shut in by work; you see, on the contrary, the meaning and the end of work. You are not merely a hand, not merely a mind; you are a soul. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Once more, the same thing is true of a

place like this. What is a college for? What tests its work? What justifies its support? One might at first be inclined to answer, "It is education, the spread of information, the acquisition of truths." But that, in reality, is not the real end of university life, nor the great desire of the generations who have founded and perpetuated this work. Not instruction merely, but a liberal education is what they sought to give; and that means an education which liberates, broadens, expands life. Not truths in the shape of facts that can be grasped, but Truth, ideal truth, forever unattained and yet forever beckoning to the scholar's mind, — that is the great word which is written on our seal. Does gain in knowledge narrow and hamper a man's higher life? Does it rob him of his power of vision and make of him nothing but an expert, a specialist, a machine? Then it is not the knowledge which liberates, but the knowledge which enslaves. It is a knowledge which, as the Apostle says, puffeth up, instead of building up.

But, on the other hand, as a man lives among us here, does there come to him more

breadth of thought, more sweep of imagination, ideal aims instead of low ambitions, hopes and dreams of life which enlarge the very thought of life itself? Then, in this increase of capacity for vision the work of a great university is fulfilled. Each study is to be tested by this idealizing quality, each teacher is effective as he interprets thus the spiritual significance of his theme. Where there is a shutting out of this world of vision, there academic life will shrivel and decline. Where the higher uses of life are kept clear from day to day, there academic life will be strong and free.

Here, finally, is the place of religion and its forms and methods in a world like ours. Why do we gather in this place from week to week for these brief moments of reflection and withdrawal? It is because life perishes without its visions. We need, once in a while, to see the whole of life in its large relations and scope and end. We need, at times, to hold fast for a moment the thoughts which just brush by us in our busier hours, and to sit face to face with our ideals. Where there is no such chance to pause in the busy rush of the world, there the visions

themselves tend to disappear, and all the color fades out of one's life.

Here, then, we bring from week to week all the varied ideals of our lives, — their intellectual ambitions, their spiritual hopes, their high desires, and their humble dreams. From day to day we deal with the parts of life, here the whole of it lies before us; elsewhere we have been engrossed with its routine and detail, here it opens before us into the world of vision. And let us be sure of this, — that in this perpetuation of the ideal relationships of life, in these visions which come and pass and which seem so transitory and unreal in the stress of life, lies the permanent need of the soul. They are not the superadded luxuries of contemplation; they are the things without which people now, as in the Hebrew time, perish. It was by no accident that Jesus called his spiritual influence "the bread of life" and "the water of life." It is precisely these things to the soul, — bread and water, the simplest elements, the most wholesome and indispensable food and drink, which the natural hunger and thirst of human nature were meant to use.

When the Apostle Peter wanted to describe

the influence of the spirit of God, it was by this sign that he traced it: "I will pour out my spirit, saith God, upon all flesh; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." That is the test to which all life is brought. When people are absorbed in discussions and controversies about religion, or satisfied with the facts and acquisitions of education, it may be something very interesting and admirable which is happening, but it is not an outpouring of the spirit of God. When God's spirit is poured out, men turn to the unattained and are obedient to the heavenly vision. They are supported, not by their achievements, but by their aspirations. The things that are unseen are to them the things that are eternal. They walk by faith, not by sight. That is the secret of academic vitality. It is the result, not of what we have, but of what we desire. Back of all our hopes for better learning and greater achievements in a place like this there lies always the greater prayer, that it may be a place of persuasive and commanding ideals, so that the young among us shall not lose their visions, and the old shall not outgrow their dreams.

XX

THE NEW THERAPEUTICS

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. — *Rom.* xii. 21.

IT is coming to be believed by the medical profession that we are possibly on the eve of a great revolution in medical practice. Only a few years ago our methods of surgery were practically revolutionized by the use of antiseptics, so that many operations are now made by surgeons, and many lives are now saved, which were once simply beyond hope. And now the doctors are beginning to say, "It is our turn." It seems not altogether inconceivable that a few years hence many of the contagious diseases which are now the scourges of civilization — diseases like diphtheria or cholera or scarlet fever — may be robbed of their terrors. It may come to pass that every practicing physician will have his laboratory of bacteriology, just as he now has his consulting-room.

And what is the principle on which this proposed change of practice rests? The prin-

ciple is not, as in the old practice, the conquering of effects of disease after it has fastened on the system: it is the prevention of the entrance of disease by fortifying the constitution against it. It is not proposed to destroy the germs of disease: it is proposed to establish a capacity of resistance, against which these germs are to be powerless. The life of the patient is to be so treated that the disease simply finds no soil to fasten on, no material on which to feed. The life becomes, as the doctors say, "immune" to the disease. The germs attack in vain a life that has been thus "immunized."

And how does this immunity come to pass? It comes to pass, so the new doctrine believes, by inoculation from another fortified life. It is security by contagion. A safe life imparts safety. We are in the habit of thinking of contagion as a quality of disease, but here we have the contagion of health. The life of some animal is made impervious to the disease, and from that one life, thus immunized, immunity proceeds. One such life, impenetrable to contagion, becomes the safety of a thousand. Thus, the health of a community may come to depend on the existence in it of

enough of these fortified lives. They simply crowd out the contagion of disease by imparting the contagion of health. There is not room for both. The germs will continue to float in the atmosphere, but they will find no entrance into the "immunized" life. The physician says to his patient: "Be not overcome of this evil, but overcome the evil by the preoccupation of your life by good."

Now, whether these new and startling discoveries in medicine are as revolutionary as many people believe is not our business here. But it is certainly interesting to notice that this newly proposed way of salvation for the bodily life only repeats the true doctrine of salvation for the life of the conscience and the soul. What is it to have a perfectly healthy conscience? Some people think, and some people teach, that a healthy conscience is a sensitive and watchful conscience, always guarding itself against the attacks of the enemy, like an alert soldier in a hostile land. And, of course, a sensitive, watchful conscience is much better than a sleepy and careless one. Yet it is not perfect health. It is an invalid conscience, guarding itself from harm, afraid of what is coming,

dreading exposure to temptation. A perfectly healthy conscience is a much more rugged thing. It is not susceptible. It is the safe, the immunized conscience. And, in the same way, what is a saved soul? It is not an invalid soul, — a frail, delicate, convalescent thing, always in danger of a new attack. A perfectly saved soul is a *safe* soul, — a soul that is impenetrable by temptation. A fort that is impregnable is safer than one that has been lost and regained. It is not so much saved as it is safe.

And how does this safety of conscience or soul come about? It comes about, says the new teaching, through contact with the purified life. One life becomes sound and clean, and then its contagion immunizes other lives. A good man gives goodness, just as a sick man gives disease. A safe soul becomes a saviour of other souls. A quiet, unassuming mother lives in a home, leading a life before which evil thoughts simply shrink away; and that contagion of purity and simplicity affects the whole home circle, and saves it from worldliness and sin. Jesus went his way among the sins of his age, impervious to their solicitations, — tempted in all points, yet

without sin; and it was as if a fresh, west wind were blowing across a malarial plain, so that the germs of selfishness and bigotry, which still swarmed in the atmosphere of his nation, simply could not fasten on those whom his spirit blessed. Such is the therapeutics of the soul. The salvation of a life or of a world is to be found, not in the impossible abolition of evil, but in the overcoming of evil by good. The good life imparts itself; and then the germs of evil, though they still float in every breeze, find no room to enter. The contagion of the good has killed the poison of the bad.

Now take that doctrine into the affairs of daily life, and see how life opens into new courage and hope. Here is a college; and it has its sporadic cases of evil, just as it has its occasional cases of disease. These evils are to be deplored: they bring harm and shame on us all. It is impossible among three thousand men that offences shall not come; but woe unto those by whom they come! It were better if a millstone were hanged about their necks, and they were cast into the sea. And yet, in spite of such evils, what is the most remarkable fact of our

moral condition? It is its general excellence. Just as one often wonders why contagious diseases get so little hold in our crowded life, so he should wonder that the contagion of evil, which blights a soul here and there, touches us so slightly.

Let us thank God for this great body of robust and fearless manhood, going its way through the temptations of youth, perfectly pure and clean. Here is the secret of our moral health, — in this great body of immunized lives among us; and here is the moral problem of the University, — not the impossible task of wholly exterminating the possibilities of evil, but the happier work of multiplying and developing and encouraging these fortified lives, these manly men, who can go up and down amid possibilities of contagion, and yet be perfectly safe and free. Each man thus freed becomes a medium of social immunity. The safety of the whole lies in the overcoming of the contagion of evil by the spread of the contagion of good. A young man cannot hide from evil, but he can become impervious to it. If he does no more than cast out the devil from his life, and leaves that life empty, back comes the devil,

with others worse than the first. But let him establish contact with immunized lives, let him take up with the interests which give no room for sin, and then his life comes to partake of that immunity. Spiritual bacteria, like physical ones, thrive only in the life which provides a soil for them. They cannot be barred out, but they can be starved out. The way to overcome evil is to be preoccupied with good.

And it is the same in the larger world about us, with all its solemn problems and anxious fears. A great many people are dreaming of a different world from the one in which we happen to live, — a world which shall have no contentions or competitions, no social disorders or temptations; a world where the germs of evil shall be no longer in the air. But that is not the world as it is given, or is likely to be given, to us; and a new social programme which depends on thus transforming the world is little more than a dream. Science is not sanguine of the extinction of the germs of disease. It turns to the more promising task of fortifying life against them. It may be possible some day to make this hard world soft; but the present problem is

to make this soft human nature hard, and strong enough to live in the world as it is. You look out into the world about you, and you see possibilities of evil on every hand. You see temptation and dissipation, drink and lust, restlessness and ambition, scattering their germs of desire about men's paths; and you wonder what is to banish all this evil from the world. Well, it is not likely to be banished, — that is probably the truth. Evil is here to stay. But then you look again, and you see what is possible, — a miracle of the moral life, beside which these triumphs of medicine are but commonplace. You see that the evil is not to be exterminated, but that it is to become uncontagious. You see the pure life walking among these poisonous paths in perfect security, as a hospital nurse walks unscathed through her wards, fortified against disease by her healthy-minded consecration. And then you say: "That is the way of the healthy soul. Its perfect love casts out fear. It carries safety because it is safe itself. It is not afraid of life: it is the master of life. It is not overcome of evil: it overcomes evil with good."

XXI

FOLLOW THOU ME

Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. — *John* xxi. 22.

THERE is a look of severity about this answer of Jesus, as though the question of Peter deserved rebuke. Peter has been receiving the solemn commands of Jesus, and is finally given that last great word, "Follow me." Then it seems as if he made himself overmuch his brother's keeper. He turns about to the other disciple, as if curious to know why John should not be called to join him in that great obedience, or suspicious lest some higher place should be given to another. "This man, what shall he do?" he says, and Jesus seems swept into an indignant condemnation of this idle curiosity or jealousy as he answers: "What is that to thee? If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Yet it is only on the surface of the story that this appearance of severity and condemnation lies. It would be strange, indeed, if the very last words which the Gospels record of Jesus should be words of indignant satire; or if a conversation of such infinitely tender confidence — "Simon Peter, lovest thou me?" "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "Feed my sheep" — could end in distrust and rebuke. Here is Peter, whose last relation with Jesus had been that of the great denial, now restored again to his place as leader of the Twelve. It cannot be that he is suspicious of another's place. He must be overwhelmed at the renewal of confidence which gives him back his own place. It cannot be that, just when Jesus is committing to him the most solemn trust, Peter should be jealously inquiring what John shall do. It must be that he stands awe-struck before his own leadership, and feels that it is too great a thing to bear alone. This seems to be the real situation. Peter, at the moment of restoration to his lost leadership, shrinks from the responsibility, not from jealousy, but from self-distrust. He has failed once; perhaps he may fail again. Who is

he that he should be trusted to feed the sheep and lambs in the Good Shepherd's place?

It may have been an intellectual hesitancy, or it may have been a moral hesitancy, or it may have been both. He may have said to himself, "Before I take up this mighty work, I must know all the details of the great design, what each participant is to do, and what part each is to have in the whole;" and, desiring this preliminary knowledge, he turns to Jesus and inquires, "Lord, what is this man to do?" Or he may have felt the need of a moral support. The task is too great for him, even if he shall understand its purport. Must he go forward alone? Shall not the other disciple — so much more faithful than he — stand with him? "Lord, what shall this man do to help me?"

Perhaps it was both of these things — a sense of insufficient knowledge and a sense of insufficient strength — which paralyzed the disciple as his new life presented itself. At any rate there he stands, checked in his capacity to lead, because of the very greatness thrust upon him. He does not know

enough, he is not strong enough, for such a vocation, and so he falls back on the man who stands nearest him, and asks to have that other man's part made plain and his support assured.

How often we see this same paralysis of effort among men who ought to be leaders in the truth or the right! Here is a man who is called to take his place in the intellectual world; and he wants to know all about his subject before he gives himself to its service. He shrinks from action until he is clear about all details. Into what part of his theory shall each section of the truth be fitted? In what department of the work shall each man find his place? He is like a musician in an orchestra who will not play his part until he knows all the parts which are to be played. There are always such people in academic life. They are stunted in activity because of the very standard of their learning. They want to know everything before they do anything. They so much fear to make a mistake that they do not dare to make a beginning. When they are summoned to play their part in the music of the perfect truth, they look about them at their

fellows in the orchestra of life, and say, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" And so the melody sweeps on without them, and they are left like men who have contrived the most perfect of instruments on which they have never learned to play.

Then, on the other hand, there is the moral form of this same hesitancy. A man comes to a great moral opportunity; and he shrinks from it, not because he does not want to do right, but because he does not think himself fit to lead. He feels his insufficiency and his solitude. It seems wholly unsuitable that he, who has failed of the right so many times, should pose as a leader in the right among his fellows. "Lord, what are these other men to do?" he says, —"these who are so much better fitted than I to lead, these Johns among our company, who have never faltered in their love of truth and right? If they will but take the lead, I shall be content to follow."

I need not say how this moral timidity, which seems to itself moral modesty, prevails in a place like this. Here, where there is a true spiritual democracy, is precisely the place where any assumption of superiority

seems most unsuitable An honest and modest young man dislikes of all things to pose as good. It is not that his desires are evil, but that he hates pretence. If moral reforms were the custom of the place, if moral leadership were nothing exceptional, then he could be counted on. But to do that which men much better than himself seem not called upon to do — that is too great a strain on his good intentions. When the moral opportunity presents itself, he turns, not to it, but to his companions, and asks, "Lord, what are these men going to do?" and the opportunity comes and goes while he is asking.

Thus evils perpetuate themselves among us, not because they are desired, but because they become traditions from which no one is bold enough to set us free. It is no one's place to lead, and so abuses are tolerated by all of us which each one of us singly scorns. There is a strange conservatism in a place like this, a conservatism which perpetuates abuses and virtues together, as though both were sacred because both were old. It is a most singular spectacle, — this of a body of the picked youth of the land, held in the

bonds of some lightly established precedent, because of reluctance to be suspected of moral self-assertion. The call comes for moral heroism; and we fall back upon the prevailing tone of our companions, and say: "Lord, why am I called alone? What shall this man beside me, who is so much stronger than I, — what shall he do?" When one sees how much can be done among us by single illustrations of unpretending right-mindedness, how the whole moral tradition among us is sometimes changed by a single group in a single Class, what a grave responsibility is this which is laid here on single souls! It is Christ coming again to Peter, and risking the hope of a great future on his loyalty and strength.

And what was it that, as Jesus saw, was the secret of Peter's hesitancy? It was that Peter was thinking of himself. When Jesus called him to a complete discipleship, his first thought was, "Lord, is it I, I who have been intellectually so unworthy a receiver of the gospel, I who have been morally a traitor, — is it I who am called to do great things?" It was not a weak or low self-consideration: but it was self-consideration after all. He

did not seem to himself the right person. John would be a better man. "Lord, hast thou not forgotten him? Lord what shall John do?"

And the answer of Jesus is the only answer which carries a man out of this reasonable hesitancy. It is the summons out of one's self and into the service of that which is greater than one's self. Peter might be ignorant and weak; John was a more perfect disciple; but it was not to an estimation of Peter's capacity that Peter was called. Here was the thing to be done, and here was the man that must do it. He must stop thinking of his own capacity and do the thing. Of course there was much that he did not know, of course there was much that he could not do; but when his master summoned him he must simply follow as best he could. It was not for him to think of himself or of John. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me," says Jesus; and as Peter gives himself to the cause and follows, his weakness is made strong.

So it is with many a modern life. What makes a man unproductive in mind is that

he is thinking of himself. He is sharpening his instrument instead of using it. What he needs is the summons to the service of that which is higher than himself, and then he takes his insufficient instrument and it serves him better than he had dared to hope. His thought flows freely and his mind is clear. The same thing is true of moral decisions. What hinders their effectiveness is self-consideration, — the thought of how it will seem, whether it is suitable, what John will say or do. What gives to conduct its sense of power is the attaching of one's self to a purpose which commands one's loyalty, and which claims the best obedience one has to give, even if others tarry till Christ comes again.

There can be no greater triumph for any life, young or old, than when it emerges from intellectual or moral hesitancy into the courage of a disciple of truth. There is no greater epoch for a community like this than when any man among us, young or old, begins to take his law of life, not from the traditions or customs or tone of the world about him, but from first-hand contact with purposes larger than himself. Such a life meets once

more the spirit of Christ moving through the midst of this modern world, and it says to him: "What are these things to thee? Follow thou me;" and in that great obedience the way is made clear.

XXII

GIDEON AND THE ANGEL

And Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die. — *Judges* vi. 22, 23.

THIS is the story of a young man who is suddenly and to his great surprise called out of a commonplace and obscure life to do a great work. He is threshing wheat in the field, and an angel appears and summons him to be the leader of Israel. But the strange feature of the story is this, — that the young man does not want to hear the call. He would rather stay in obscurity than risk publicity. He shrinks from the angel. "Alas, O my Lord God," he says, "for I have seen an angel face to face." But then God says to him: This does not mean death to you; it means life. This is not a thing to be afraid of; it is the beginning of your larger work. Fear not; you are called to great things. Obey the vision. Thou shalt not die! Then young Gideon no

longer shrinks from the duty which has come to him, but builds an altar, and writes on it, "In God is my peace," and goes out to the fight which is to redeem his people.

Something like this is the story of many a man's life. In various ways and often very suddenly the angel of God appears before such an unexpectant life and summons it to duties which at first sight seem full of threatening uncertainties and risks. Out of sheer, justifiable self-distrust the man shrinks back and cries: "Alas, alas, I have seen an angel face to face." But out of the duty speaks the Lord: "Fear not; thou shalt not die;" and with the duty comes the strength to do it, and at last the meaning of life is found in facing the angel with his message of surprise.

Sometimes we see all this story, for instance, in the course of the intellectual life. Here is a man diligently studying some scientific principle, until he seems to be brought almost within sight of a great discovery; and then suddenly the truth flashes on him from some unexpected side. It seems to overthrow all his conclusions; it forces him to begin all over again; it postpones all his hopes, so that he cries: "Alas, my Lord God! for I

have seen this angel of the larger truth." Then comes the test of the scientific mind. If that man hides from the unwelcome truth he is destined to become only one more feeble defender of a lost cause; but if he looks the unwelcome visitant straight in the face, then — out of the very truth that seemed to thwart him — comes the vision of the larger law.

It is one of the most curious facts of scientific progress, that many of its great discoveries have been confirmed through the consideration of exceptions which seemed at first hopelessly hostile to the truth thus far obtained. It was these very facts which filled out the truth and became its best verification. The way out of these objections was not round them, but through them. They came not to destroy, but to fulfil. In one of Bishop Berkeley's dialogues two friends stand in a garden, and one says: "You see, Hylas, the water of yonder fountain, how it is forced upward to a certain height, at which it breaks and falls back into the basin from which it rose. So the same principles which seem to lead to skepticism, pursued to a certain point, bring one back to common sense."

The same story might be told of the life of duty. A man is leading a featureless, meagre life of routine or business, of careless living or purposeless study, threshing out the wheat of his daily life without much sense of duty or desire; and one day God's angel comes and sets before him a generous and self-sacrificing work. The thought of serving others comes to him with its imperative demand. The call of a new ideal sounds like a trumpet in his ears. I remember how one of our young men was, one day, thus called of God to help our common life; and how modestly and boyishly he said that he wanted to make of his life in college something more than residence at a winter watering-place.

But then it is that young Gideon, self-distrustful, unimportant, untried, shrinks from the invitation of the larger life, and hiding his face from the vision, says: "Alas, alas, I have seen an angel face to face. Who am I that God should ask so much of me? Here is a task which needs a genius, or a hero, or a saint, and the angel comes to me. Alas, O my Lord God!" That is the critical moment in many a life. When St. Paul told

King Agrippa the story of his life, the key of it lay in this: "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." The angel had come to that man and had called him straight away from all that he had meant to do, or thought himself fit to do, and he hid his face, the story says, and sank on the ground. But then he rose and took up his life again, as one who could not be disobedient to his vision, and in his obedience he found both his happiness and his power.

It is much the same with any honest life. A young man sits, some day, considering what he is going to do in the world, and reckons up his capacities and tastes and opportunities, that he may make a wise decision; and then, in the midst of his computations, there appears the vision of that which he would like to do if only he could, but which he does not think he is fit to do. He hides his face from the vision, as though it tempted him to abandon that which he was best equipped to do. But if any mature man should report what it is that makes men most useful in this world, he would say that it was — more than anything else — an obedience to the vision of what one's heart desires

to do. When one, in middle age, looks back over the careers of his contemporaries, he observes that it is not natural endowment alone which has been most effective in the world, but far more the persistent and continuous dedication of the will to that end which, however unattainable it at the outset seemed, commanded the ambition and invited the heart. Capacity grows out of desire much oftener than desire grows out of capacity. Moderate gifts, sincerely consecrated, often develop great powers. Many of the most brilliant men fail to take the place that belongs to them because they have trusted their adaptations more than they have trusted their hearts; and many a man of no extraordinary gifts attains the highest usefulness because, when the angel of choice came to him, he dismissed his self-distrust and was obedient to his vision.

Indeed, this same story is one that must be told of a great part of the deeper experiences of life through which every soul some day has to pass. Most of the trouble and most of the tragedy of human life come from trying to dodge the facts of life; and most of the peace which is possible to any soul

comes from habitually looking experiences squarely in the face. Sometimes you see this in the moral life. A man goes on trying to believe that wrong is right, and evil good, and that somehow he is not going to reap just what he sows, and then some day the angel of his duty stands before him and he hides his face from the vision. Then begins that man's real tragedy. He does not want to face the angel because it is a stern and serious presence; and in that refusal to look facts in the face lies his whole future of regret and reproach and shame.

Sometimes this same thing happens in one's experience of trouble. A man or a woman goes on trying to play that life is all soft and sunny and gay, and one day the angel of trouble enters into the midst of the frivolity and thoughtlessness, and the poor limp soul does not want to face it. "Alas, alas," it cries, "for I have seen the angel of trouble face to face." Half the sorrow and the despair of such experiences comes from this turning away from the visitation of trouble, and the blank and terrible hostility with which the angel of darkness is so often met.

And how is it, on the other hand, that

people come through these dark regions into any sort of stability and peace? They do it by their entire self-commitment to the angel when he comes. The least swerving from that line means disaster. The least shrinking from that vision means surrender. One of the most extraordinary features of the life of Jesus is this, — that at a certain point in his ministry there seems to come over him a distinct recognition of how it was all to end. He sees that it is not to be a tranquil teaching in Galilee, but that it means Jerusalem, and the judgment-hall, and the cross. And how does that conviction affect him? Why, it seems to lift him into a new degree of composure and power. His words grow more explicit, determined, and strong. He sets his face to go to Jerusalem. The angel of his destiny has appeared to him and he has looked the angel straight in the face, and it has brought him peace; so that his last words to his friends are those great, strange words: "My peace I leave with you."

It is the same in its own way and place with every faithful life. Very silently and secretly God's angels still appear, as one is threshing the grain of daily occupations in

the pastures of daily life. Some of you are called by such a spiritual visitor to do great things, and some to do small ones; some to endure hard things, and some to the equal test of softness and ease; some to troubles and burden-bearing, and some to the equal trial of carelessness, selfishness, and luxury; some are met by the angel in the midst of daily work, and some in the privacy of secret prayers. Do you know what it is in any such way to meet an angel face to face; to have your duty stand thus sternly before you; to have your opportunity face to face with your self-distrust; to have your trouble brighten before you as you look at it until you see that it is a heavenly visitor? In that blessed moment is the test of life. Hide from the angel, and your life remains a stunted, wasted thing. Look into its eyes, take the gift from its hands, and you go back to life, — not always to greatness, or glory, or leadership, but always to the interior happiness and peace of one who has heard the angel speaking to his heart: "Fear not; peace be unto thee: thou shalt not die."

XXIII

MERCY AND TRUTH

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. — *Ps.* lxxxv. 10.

THIS was the psalmist's prophecy of the golden age. When God the Lord — as he says — should speak to His people and God's salvation be nigh, then mercy and truth would meet together, and righteousness and peace would kiss each other. Mercy and truth are intellectual contrasts, righteousness and peace are moral contrasts; but in both cases the same distinction is made. It is the distinction between a life that wishes to be kind and a life that wishes to be just. Shall you in your thought lean to generosity and liberality, or shall you stand squarely on the facts? That is the contrast between mercy and truth. Shall you in your conduct act for making things right, or for making things pleasant? That is the contrast between righteousness and peace. The qualities stand over against each other. Each is good; you can hardly

tell which is the greater good; yet they appear to be inconsistent virtues. Let a man make mercy and peace the habit of his life, and truth and right seem hard to attain; let him give himself to truth and duty, and mercy and peace seem not for him.

The contrast meets us, first of all, in the small concerns of social life. On the one hand there are the people who resolve, at any cost, to deal truthfully with their neighbors; they will not deceive, or flatter, or extenuate; truth shall be the law of their lips. Who are these worthy people? They are your censorious and critical friends, whose judgments you know are just, but who are a thorn in your flesh because their judgments are so hard. They interpret you precisely as you are, but they give no credit for that which you are not, but desire to be. It is almost easier to love your enemies and bless those who curse you, than to find pleasure in such friends.

> "But of all plagues, good Heaven, Thy wrath can send,
> Save, save, O save me from the candid friend."

Then, on the other hand, there are the generous people who believe in mercy and peace. The world is not to be judged; it is

to be enjoyed. It is not to be expected that one's neighbors are faultless. One must be kind, not because it is truthful, but because it is merciful. Of such persons it may be said in a very different sense from that which the psalmist meant: "Their ways are ways of pleasantness, and all their paths are peace." Thus from one side to the other of this contrast social judgments swing; and still it seems like a golden age when mercy and truth shall meet, and righteousness and peace shall kiss.

The same contrast marks our Christian thought and conduct. On the one hand, one may ask: "If there is one absolute truth in religion, why should one be tolerant of other statements of faith? What room is there for liberality in religion? What is a liberal Christian but a contradiction in terms?" From this point of view error becomes a sin, not to be tolerated, but to be condemned. Then, on the other hand, over against the bigotry of the believer is the virtue of tolerance. Instead of the old rigidity we have the new sympathy. After the ages of conformity comes the age of liberalism.

But is there nothing to apprehend in this

beautiful growth of theological mercy? There is everything to apprehend if it remains an issue between mercy and truth. There is a liberalism in religion which is very noble; but there is a liberalism which is but another name for spiritual indifference. It is merciful to the opinions of others because it has no clear opinions of its own. It is tolerant of all creeds because it cares little for any. It attains mercy by abandoning truth. A person may find his own vision of truth obscured, and may delude himself with the impression that he has acquired the virtue of tolerance, when in reality all that keeps him from bigotry is his indolence, and all that represents belief to him is self-esteem.

Finally, behind all these human contrasts there is the same twofold aspect of the life of God. On the one hand, we may think of Him as truth; on the other hand, we may think of Him as mercy. On the one hand is His righteousness, and on the other His peace. It seems sometimes like two different Deities, — here the God of law sweeping us into tragedies, disasters, unrest; there the God of mercy, compassionate, restful, the source of peace. How tragic this apparent

dualism sometimes seems, as though love were lost in law. From the midst of trouble and fear one cries out against the God of truth and appeals to the God of mercy; and it seems as if there were no unity in which the mind could rest.

Now, into the midst of this apparent conflict, beginning as it does in the most trivial of social interests and ending in the deep problems of the religious life, sweeps the confident song of the psalmist. Looking at these two aspects of life, he finds in them no contradiction at all. Mercy and truth, he says, are met; righteousness and peace have kissed. The more truth, that is to say, that you have, the more you will find it leading to mercy; and the more you do of righteousness, the more surely it makes for peace. The mercifulness of the truth and the peace of duty-doing, — there, according to the psalmist, lies the deeper unity of life.

What is it, for instance, that makes one's hasty social judgments so severe, as though truth must shut out mercy? Is it, in reality, the truth which is so hard? Oh, no! It is, on the contrary, the lack of truth with which one judges which permits him to be unquali-

fiedly harsh. He hears one whisper of evil, adds to it his own careless guess, and sends both shouting a falsehood over the world. And what does more truth bring with it? It brings with it more mercy. Better knowledge of your neighbor softens your judgment of him. The reason so many people look so stupid or vain is usually because you know so little of their unexpressed ideals and hopes. What looks like vanity is often only shyness; and what passes for stupidity is often only reserve. "Why do you hate that man?" said some one to Charles Lamb; "you do not even know him." "Of course I do not know him," answered Lamb, "for if I knew him I probably should not hate him." Thus, as truth enters into our careless judgments, mercy comes hand in hand with her. What is there more humiliating to any honest man than to have been confidently judging another's life, and then one day to discover that one simply did not know the truth and has been both believing and propagating that sort of half-truth which is the most insidious form of lie! And what an insight into such careless judgments is that of Jesus Christ when, in the midst of his betrayal, he prays for his merci-

less enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Or turn back to the problem of toleration in religion. What is it that makes a man really liberal in his faith? Must you compromise truth in order to get mercy? On the contrary, the only man who can be unaffectedly tolerant is the man who has a firm grasp on truth of his own. The more the truth has revealed itself to him the more does he realize its scope and manifoldness and the many aspects of it which are not for him to see. Toleration is not compromise; it is insight. The Christian unity for which the world is looking is not to come by the yielding of truth to mercy; it is to come only through the larger appreciation of the dimensions of truth. The more truth, the more mercy. The more conviction, the more charity. Liberality in religion is waiting, not for men to believe less, but for men to believe more. The religious bigot makes confession that his religion is a very limited thing; and with the larger faith comes the more comprehensive hope.

Finally, the same unity dimly reveals itself within the spiritual life of man. No one can

say that all is clear before us here; that in this world of personal experience truth and mercy, righteousness and peace seem always happily at one. You do your duty and still you suffer; you love your children and still you lose them; you work your hardest and still you seem to fail. But this at least is the testimony of all consecrated souls: that the deeper you enter into such experiences the more the lines of truth and of mercy seem to meet. The reason God's demands often look so merciless is probably because we know so little of their truth. If one could only see the whole of law, he would see it rounding into love. If one could only see the end of duty, he would find there the only permanent peace.

When Jesus Christ comes to the end of his short life and the world seems against him and his righteousness against the world, then he turns to his followers and says: "My peace I leave with you." Righteousness and peace have kissed each other in his heart. And when again he transmits his mission to those who are to follow him, he says that the spirit of the truth will come and that it will be the Comforter. What a wonderful word

is that! How uncomforting, how uncomfortable the truth often seems; and yet in these deep places of life truth and mercy meet, and the truth becomes the only comforter. It is the Holy Spirit, and it is a comforter because it is true.

Such is the reiteration by Jesus of the psalmist's doctrine. It is the picture of the stable and happy life. The man who has attained this unity of spirit neither blinks the truth to keep things pleasant, nor shirks his duty to keep the peace. He knows that the only way to advance the truth is by loyalty to so much of truth as he has received, and that the only permanent peace is a righteous peace. The more he knows, the more mercy joins with truth; the more he believes, the more tolerant he grows. His liberality is the fruit of his faith. He does his duty and expects no external peace; he reads his Master's words: "Come unto me and your yoke shall be made easy;" but he does not expect that the yoke will be removed. He expects the rub of the yoke on his shoulder. Yet he has found the interior peace which nothing but righteousness can give. He wears his yoke, and it is easy; he bears his burden, and

it is light. Thus, his way is not all easy and plain, but it is at least harmonious and free. Mercy and truth have met and kissed each other. The life of such a soul is like the motion of the bird as it sways in the air. Not by any single force, but by the balanced action of two opposing wings is that beautiful ease attained. So, mercy and truth with their opposing action lift a soul, until at last, with wings uncrippled, it mounts into the world of light and liberty and song.

XXIV

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. — *John* xiv. 27.

IT was on a Thursday afternoon, and at just about this hour of the day, that Jesus went with his friends away from the turbulent crowd of the city to the quiet upper room and kept the Passover with them. One might pause anywhere in this chapter and find himself among the most solemn teachings in the history of the world. It is the heart of that Gospel which has been called the heart of Christ. Jesus has given to his disciples the bread and wine and asked them to eat and drink in remembrance of him. Then he goes on to tell them of the life after death, into which he is passing, and of the Father whom he reveals, and of the spirit of truth which is to be their Comforter. Then he offers them a parting gift, a spiritual legacy, to take away their trouble and their fear. And what a strange gift it is, either for him

to be able to give at just that time, or for them to be able to receive! "Peace," he says, "I leave with you,—my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

When one thinks of the circumstances of Jesus as he offered this bequest, what an extraordinary promise it seems to be! Here is this group of friends, escaping for an hour from the tumult of those last days. All through the week Jesus had been in the midst of excited enemies and anxious friends. This very evening Judas had gone out to betray him. The trial, the tragedy, the flight of his friends, all lay close before him, plain to his view. Was there ever a week more unpeaceful, more tempestuous than this?

Indeed, was there ever a less peaceful career than the whole ministry of Jesus? From the beginning to the end he was involved in misapprehensions and misinterpretations. To a degree unique in history, he was solitary in his ideals, a cause of painful divisions, controversies, and agitations, so that he justly said that he was not come into the world to bring peace, but a sword. If

he had said to his friends: "Fortitude I leave with you, my courage, my consistency, my resistance to treacherous enemies and mistaken friends, I leave with you," — that would have seemed a natural and legitimate legacy for a life thus misinterpreted and betrayed. And yet, just as near the beginning of his restless, wandering life he said: "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," so now, in these last days which seemed as far from peacefulness as days could be, he says again: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

Why is it, then, that Jesus, in the midst of so unrestful a career, is able to maintain this extraordinary composure of soul, and to promise it, as he dies, to his friends? It is, of course, because he has discerned what it is to have peace of mind. For peace does not mean — as one is often tempted to believe — mere idleness, or inactivity, or emptiness, or stagnation. Peace means the absence of conflict, the overcoming of discord. A landscape which is peaceful is not one which has no diversity or life in it; but one in which the waving woods and grazing cattle and gliding stream blend before us into unity

and harmony, so that it lies before us as a tranquillizing whole. In the same way a peaceful life is not a life which has no vitality or diversity or action in it; but one in which all the varied incidents of experience are parts of a harmonious whole. It is, in short, what we call the single-minded life, undistracted by different aims, peaceful because at one with itself, active but controlled. The opposite of a peaceful life is not a busy life; it is a discordant, divided, aimless life. The opposite of rest is not work, it is restlessness.

What gives to Jesus Christ, then, his quality of restfulness in the midst of his tumultuous career, so that he legitimately gives his peace to his disciples, is the completeness and single-mindedness of his allegiance to the end for which he lived. His meat, his drink, he says, — that which sustains him from day to day, — is to accomplish that which is given him to do. It is the unswerving dedication of the life of Jesus that keeps it, among the most distracting agitations without, yet peaceful within. People turn to the life of Jesus for direction of their lives just as people turn to the mariner's compass

for direction, because it steadily points one way. You can adjust yourself to it because you know it does not swerve. It may be pitch-dark about you, and the storm may veer and shift, but you hold your little lantern to that needle, sure that it will be true. It is the sign of stability in the midst of storm, as though it said to the lost traveller: "My peace I give unto you," and looking at it, the man knows his way and goes on in peace again.

That is the peace of Jesus Christ, — an interior composure born of the undivided life. And now, on this afternoon, as on the last day of his life, when he offered to men this gift of peace, he comes again with this same gift to the modern world. With all the mighty gains of this present age in knowledge and in power, there often seems to be one treasure which it has almost wholly lost, — the blessing of peace. With all the special privileges and blessings of American life, certainly its one peculiar evil is its restless, feverish, shifting, unpeaceful way of living. Mr. Ruskin once said that the Americans as a nation were wholly undesirous of rest, and incapable of it, discontented with what they

are, yet having no ideal of anything which they desire to become, as the tide of the troubled sea when it cannot rest. Must we not confess that it was a just indictment? Here are our industrial discontent and our social ambition, and the effort and strain and competition of American life, sweeping almost every life among us into their hurrying stream, until we seem carried clean out of hearing of any such gentle words as, "Peace I leave with you; come unto me, and ye shall find rest."

Yet the teaching of Jesus is not that this turbulent activity of modern life is to be regarded as in itself an evil. On the contrary, it ought to be recognized as a great privilege that we are set in an age and country abounding in social agitation and change. That is the first condition of having any part in creating and moulding a better future. Jesus did not shrink from the intense activity of his brief three years. He gloried in it, and took command of it, and marched through it with a high and lofty joy. There should be the same gratitude in any life that recognizes the signs of the present time. It is a good time in which to be alive — a crea-

tive, changeful, prophetic time. The very pressure of its demands on us is a summons to service. The very restlessness of the time is better than the stagnation of more tranquil ages. Social feverishness is better than social death.

What is it, then, which gives the pathos to this hurrying, scrambling, feverish modern world? It is not the fact of its tremendous activity, but the distracted, divided, undetermined mind, which rushes into this activity to no purpose or end. Mr. Huxley, it is said, was once on his way to a meeting of the British Association in Dublin, and arriving late at the station, threw himself into a jaunting-car and called out to the coachman, "Drive fast." Away went the cab, jolting over the streets, until Mr. Huxley inquired: "Do you know where we are going?" and the driver answered: "No, I don't know where we are going, but anyhow I'm driving fast." Is not that a picture of the modern time, — driving fast, but going nobody knows where; a speed without purpose, a restlessness without any end or peace? What does this social discontent about us really want? It does not clearly know. That is what makes it so

pathetic. It wants anything it has not got. As one of those pitiful followers of General Coxey said, as he tramped to Washington: "We don't know what we want, but we want it mighty bad, and we want it mighty quick."

And is it not much the same with the social distractions and ambitions of modern life? Who does not know what it means to be tremendously busy without any clear and defensible reason; to be ambitious without an end; to be scrambling for things you do not want; to be conscious of the divided mind, half frivolous, half serious, set between those two sorts of people who, as Laurence Oliphant said, made up English society, — the wholly worldly, and the worldly holy? That is the secret of the unpeaceful life. It is the undetermined and unfixed desire, the heart that has not learned to sing the psalmist's song: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed."

Now to a life thus restless, chafing, divided — as whose of ours is not? — by conflicting ends, comes Jesus Christ, on the most solemn evening of his life, and opens the way, not to certainty of conviction, not to precision of creed, but at least to the attainment of

spiritual peace. It is not to be by a retreat from the absorbing interests of the present time, any more than Jesus found peace by retreating from the issues of his day. It is simply by the wholesome and rational dedication of life to the compelling ideals of a Christian faith. Suppose you could just say to yourself to-day: "I do not expect in my life external quietness and rest. I throw myself, as my Master did, into the conflicts and problems of the time; but I propose to live among them undistracted and at peace. After all, it is not my Universe. I am simply in it to do my best. My meat and drink are to do His will who sent me;" then, what is this new composure with which you begin to grasp your work? Why, it is the peace of God which passeth understanding. It is the great word spoken again: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."

Behind all ambitions and desires lies this unity of intention which gives peace of mind. Who knows what lies before us as we go our different ways into our different lives? Who knows but that, as with Jesus centuries ago, there may be close ahead of us a Gethsemane, a betrayal, a solitude, a cross? And